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THE

(147.58)

SPIRIT

OF

HEBREW POETRY,

BY J. G. HERDER.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,

BY JAMES MARSH.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BURLINGTON:

EDWARD SMITH,  
(Successor to Chauncey Goodrich.)

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1833.

366.4  
Herder

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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The work, of which a translation is here offered to the publick, has long been celebrated in Germany, as one of distinguished merit. On its first publication it did much to awaken and cherish the taste for Oriental and especially Hebrew antiquity, which has since so extensively prevailed among the scholars of that country. It taught them, too, in the study of Hebrew antiquity and Hebrew poetry, as the works of Lessing, Winkelmann, and others had done in regard to Grecian antiquity, to divest themselves of the conceptions, and modes of thought, which are peculiar to their own country and institutions, and of the peculiar spirit of their own age ; by the force of imagination to place themselves in the condition of those ancient patriarchs and prophets, whose thoughts and feelings they seek to apprehend ; to see the world as they saw it, to feel as they felt, to imbibe and to express their spirit in its truth and simplicity. Hence, though Germany has since been fruitful in works connected with Hebrew poetry and history, and though the great work of Bp. Lowth has been translated and is appreciated there, this still retains its place, as a classical and standard work.

These general facts might seem sufficient, in the view even of those, who are not personally acquainted with the work, to claim for it a place in the biblical literature of this country, and the few among us, who are acquainted with it, have long wished for a translation, which should render it accessible especially to all who are professionally engaged in biblical studies. The same influence, it is believed moreover, is needed here, and indeed among English scholars generally, which, as above remarked, it exerted, in concert with other works, in the country which produced it. The work of Bp. Lowth is the only one of much distinction, whose influence is felt either in England or in this country, in cultivating in the minds of students a genial love for the spirit of Hebrew antiquity. What that is, as compared with the work of Herder, is readily seen by any one, who is acquainted with both, and capable of appreciating the difference between them. Valuable, and indeed indispensable as it is, to the student of the Bible, from the richness of its thoughts and the nice discrimination exhibited in its learned criticism, it differs essentially from that of Herder in the point of view, from which it contemplates the subject of which it treats. It seeks to illustrate and make intelligible the beauties and sublimities of Hebrew poetry, by comparing it in all its varieties, with the productions of Grecian and Roman art, and has done perhaps all that can be desired in following out that mode of critical comparison. It exhibits the views, which must naturally be taken, and are therefore justly taken, by a mind thoroughly disciplined and cultivated by a study of what in English literature is exclusively understood by classical learning both ancient and modern.

But in one sense it may be justly said, that the more thoroughly one's understanding is moulded by the forms, and occupied with the conceptions exhibited in the literature of one age and country, the less is it qualified to imbibe the genuine spirit, and feel the simple power of every other national literature. This must necessarily be the case, if it be so pre-occupied and biassed as to judge of all others, and test their merits, exclusively by the result of comparison with that, from which its own character was derived. Unless it have the higher power of divesting itself of all that is peculiar in its acquired forms of thought, and in those conceptions by which it takes cognizance of the objects of its knowledge, of clothing itself anew in the forms of thought peculiar to another people, and of so adopting their conceptions for its own, as to contemplate the world around them under the same relations with them, the man can never participate in their emotions, nor breathe the spirit of their poetry. He must not only be acquainted with the facts of their history, the modes of life, and the circumstances of every kind, by which their habits of thought and feeling were moulded, as a mass of antiquarian lore, but must learn to place himself entirely in their *point of view*, and to see all these particulars in the relation to each other, and to the observer, which they would then assume. When he has done this, he will be prepared to understand why they thought, and felt, and wrote as they did ; and if he have the feeling and inspiration of the poet, he will sympathize with their emotions, and the living spirit of their poetry will be kindled up in his own imagination. How difficult it is for us to do this, however, in relation to the poetry

of a people so widely diverse from us in all the circumstances of their earthly existence, can be understood only by those who have looked at the subject with enlarged and philosophical views. Thus to enter into the spirit of Grecian poetry, to understand the child-like simplicity of Homer, and appreciate the truth of feeling in his representations, is a high attainment for the classical student, yet the Greeks were our neighbours and kindred, when compared with the more ancient and Oriental Hebrews. When we place ourselves in the tents of the Hebrew patriarchs, on the plains of Arabia, or the mountains of Palestine, every thing is to be learned anew. The language, the habits of life, the modes of thought and of intercourse, the heavens above, and the earth beneath, all are changed, and present to us a strange and foreign aspect. When in addition to this we consider, that the poetry, which we are here called to study, belongs to the earliest periods of recorded time, and embodies many of the first simple and child-like conceptions of the human mind, and when we reflect, too, how difficult it is for us to return upon our own childhood, and revive the faded conceptions and forgotten feelings, with which we then looked abroad upon the works of nature, observed the conduct of our fellow-men, or contemplated our own being and destiny, we may apprehend something of the difficulties, which an author has to overcome, who would fully enter into the spirit of Hebrew poetry, and make it intelligible to a mere English reader. We may understand too how impossible it would be by the method, which Lowth has pursued, and by that alone, to do full justice to a body of poetry so peculiar, and so diverse

in its whole spirit, from that with which he brings it into comparison. Hence the necessity of the work of Herder ; and the end, which he sought to accomplish, was to supply that, which was wanting in the celebrated lectures of Bp. Lowth. He has aimed by tracing the simple and child-like conceptions, which had been transmitted from the infancy of the race, and which had a predominant influence, in connexion with the outward circumstances of their existence, in giving its character and spirit to their poetry, in a word, by looking at these in their causes, to place us in the proper point of view, and enable us to feel and appreciate them for ourselves. But what farther is necessary to be said on this point the author has himself said in the plan of his work, in his preface, and in various parts of the work itself.

How far the author has succeeded in regard to the attainment of his end, the reader, with proper qualifications for forming an opinion, must judge for himself. That he has always apprehended in their true sense the early conceptions of the Hebrews is not to be supposed, nor would any one probably undertake to defend all his views, even of important matters, connected with the early traditions of the race. The biblical representations of Paradise, of the garden of Eden, of the temptation and fall of Adam, of the Cherubim, of the deluge, and of what Herder denominates mythological representations generally, have ever furnished an ample field of speculation, in which every critick feels at liberty to form his own opinions, and for the most part to interpret by his own rules. So far as philosophical and theological considerations influenced the author, he seems to have aimed chiefly at



meeting the popular objections to the representations of Scripture, which were then very generally prevalent, and are so more or less in every age, by showing, that, although we cannot understand these, as they would at first seem to mean, when seen from our point of view, they yet exhibit when seen from the right position, and in their true relations to the age and people, for which they were originally made, a sense both natural and rational. To judge fairly of the author, as a man of piety and of sober and correct views, from the representations, which he has given of these matters, we must consider moreover the atmosphere, in which he wrote, and the free spirit of Biblical criticism, as exhibited at the same time by Eichhorn and other contemporary German writers. But after making due allowances of this sort, it will still be felt, that the work contains some things irreconcilable with just views, nor would I be understood as subscribing to all the sentiments, which I am herewith exhibiting to the publick.

If it be asked, why then do I exhibit opinions, which I deem erroneous, I can only say, that others, as well as myself, and those in whose judgment I place the highest confidence, have thought it extremely desirable, all things considered, that the work should be given to the publick, and my views of duty to my author, as a faithful translator, did not permit me to misrepresent his opinions in any thing of importance.\* I was at

\*I fear that in one or two instances, the translation, through inadvertence, is such as may seem to convey a sense farther removed from what are considered correct views, than the original. An instance of this occurs on page 189, where "Hell" properly means the place of the dead. It is explained by reference to page 176.

first disposed to avoid the difficulty by accompanying the work with notes, and giving in them my own remarks, on whatever would probably be considered objectionable by the lovers of divine truth. I soon found, however, on considering the nature of the subjects that would require to be noticed in this way, that I must either give a naked opinion, where a sense of propriety would not permit me to do so, or enter into discussions of a philosophical and theological kind, unsuited to the character, and beyond the proper limits of the work. My belief is, moreover, that such is the character and spirit of the work, taken as a whole, as to give it an influence highly beneficial to the cause of truth and of sound Biblical learning among us, if only it be read in the spirit that dictated it, and to correct in the general result, whatever individual errors of opinion it may contain. It is only to be regretted, that the author had not completed the plan which he had sketched, and we could then, no doubt, have judged more fairly, of the proportions and bearings of the parts which we have.

What, and how comprehensive his plan was, will be seen from his own sketch of it, immediately following this preface. It seems, too, to have been his favourite enterprize, and cherished with fondness, as he remarked to one of his friends, from his very childhood. His hopes, however, were never fully realized, and only a part of the general plan was ever executed. During the latter part of his life, when he had hoped for leisure to accomplish it, he was so much oppressed with other duties, as at last to be removed in the midst of his labours, when he had scarcely entered upon the third division of his work.

Even the two first divisions still required some important additions and corrections from the author's hand. The work however was published by him, and nearly in its present form, at Dessau, in 1782 and 1783. After his death, which took place in 1803, a second edition with such additions, as could be made from the papers, which he had left, was published by his friend J. G. Mueller of Schaffhausen, in 1805 and 1806. The third edition, with some small contributions of his own, was published in 1822 by Prof. Justi, of Marburg, in two vols. 8vo. This is esteemed the best edition, and from it the present translation has been made.

Of my own undertaking as translator I have no disposition to say any thing further, except that I have been very well aware of its difficulty, and have aimed to perform it with all reasonable exactness and fidelity to the original. As a work of taste, it requires more care and labour than would be necessary, where less regard was had to elegance of composition, and I have aimed, as far as as I was able, to give a fair expression of the original. The numerous translations from the Hebrew, and other poetical effusions especially, I have endeavoured to exhibit with as much accuracy as could well be attained in a matter of so much difficulty. These were regarded by the author, as the chief object of his work, and his translations from the Hebrew were made with peculiar care. He aimed to preserve and exhibit, as far as possible, not the thoughts merely, but their form and colouring, and the precise tones of feeling which were associated with them in the minds of the authors, and of those for whom they were originally written. In this he has succeeded, undoubtedly, far better than Lowth, whose poetical paraphrases

serve only to convert the simplicity of the Hebrew into the more artificial forms of expression, which belong to the classick poetry of more modern times. It was a matter of course, therefore, in giving a translation of Herder, to consider this as the part of his work, which he would most value himself, and to preserve, as far as possible, his peculiar views of the sentiment of the original Hebrew. Yet, in so regarding it, I have thought it necessary also to have reference to the language of the English translation, and have always preferred it, where it could be done without misrepresenting the sense of Herder. Regard to this has led me also to be less careful of metrical arrangement, than I should otherwise have been. Herder has for the most part, though not uniformly, adhered to the Iambic measure, though with little regard to the length of the lines. When this could not be done without giving the translation a more artificial colouring than suits our notions of simplicity in such things, I have in most cases merely preserved the parallelisms, and aimed only at the most simple rhythm. In translating other poetical effusions, than those from the Hebrew, a few of which the author has inserted in the work, I have merely followed the form of the original. My aim has been in all things of importance, to give a faithful representation of the author's work in regard both to matter and form. I could not learn till quite recently, that a version of any portion of the work had been previously made either in England or this country ; but within a few days have received a copy of a work under the title of "Oriental Dialogues," which is a translation of a part of the first volume of this work. Several of the dialogues are omitted, and

the order of the remainder changed by the translator, so that it can hardly be considered a satisfactory account of the original, and, had I known of its existence, would not have saved me the labour which I have bestowed upon the work.

The first volume, which is now ready for publication, it will be observed by comparison with the plan of the work, contains only the introduction and a brief account of the life and character of Moses. The other volume, containing the first and second parts of the work itself, will be prepared for publication, as soon as the pressure of other duties will permit. That it may do something to promote a genuine taste for ancient learning, and the simplicity of primitive antiquity generally, and more especially love for those inspired records of Hebrew antiquity, which have so many and so peculiar claims upon the regard of every student, is the sincere wish of the

TRANSLATOR.

## PLAN OF THE WORK.

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The beautiful and justly celebrated work of Bp. Lowth, *de sacra poesi Hebræorum*, is universally known, and might seem to preclude the necessity of the present undertaking. A nearer comparison of its contents, however, will show, that the present work is neither a translation, nor an imitation of it. Whether the sphere, which it occupies, be of equal or inferior importance, it is at least sufficiently distinct, and cannot be without its interest and use to the lovers of the most ancient, simple, and sublime poetry in general, nor indeed to all, who cherish a liberal curiosity respecting the progress of knowledge, divine, and human, as connected with the earlier history of our race.

In a prolonged *introduction* are investigated three *principal particulars*, from which in its origin the character of the poetry of the Hebrews was derived. In the first place, are exhibited the poetical characteristics of their *language* in its structure and copiousness; then the *primitive conceptions*, which they had received as a legacy from the most ancient times, and which constitute, as it were, a *cosmology* as sublime as it is poetical; and third, the *history of their patriarchs* down to their great law-giver, and whatever in it was fitted to *distinguish*, as well the *whole nation* generally, as more particularly their writings and the *spirit of their poetry*.

The work itself properly commences with Moses, the *law-giver* of the nation ; and proceeds to show what influence he exerted, or failed to exert, on the spirit of the people, and of their posterity, by his *deeds*, by his *legislation*, and by the *exhibition* of both in his *history* and in his own *poetical* effusions. It points out what conceptions, transmitted from more ancient times, he adopted and practically applied, and what he altered in this legacy of the patriarchs ; what view of their promised land, and of the nations around them, he aimed to impress upon their minds ; and finally, by what means he formed the poetry of the nation, gave it its *pastoral* and *rural* character, and consecrated it to the uses of the *sanctuary* and of the *prophets* of Jehovah. The *causes* by which these effects were brought about are unfolded out of the history of the race, and their *influence* exhibited in the most striking examples of later times.

In the next place, the history itself is carried forward from *Moses* to the period of the highest national prosperity, and of the most powerful *king*, under whom and his son occurred the *second* marked development of national poetry. The most beautiful specimens of it, produced during this period, are explained from the *causes*, which gave rise to them, are placed in that true *Oriental light*, which is necessary to a perception of their beauties, and the effects produced by them in after times unfolded. It is implied of course, that some of the most interesting and instructive of these specimens are inserted in the work, in a *translation* both intelligible, and capable of exhibiting something of their true spirit.

The work then passes to the *third* period of the art,

as it existed among this people long before their downfall,—to the voice of the *prophets*. The *characters* of these patriotick and divinely prompted leaders of the people are unfolded, an *introduction* given to their writings, and some of their most touching, beautiful, and sublime passages here and there embodied in the work.

Next come the sorrowful tones of lamentation, which accompanied and followed the *downfall of the nation*; and those which breathed hope and admonition in regard to its *re-establishment*; the effects produced by the writings of this people, when collected together, and made known in other languages, especially the Greek, and their influence through the writings and teachers of *christianity* down to our own times.

A few chapters at the end of the work investigate the history of the mode, in which this poetry has been regarded and treated by the Jews and other nations; the different success, with which it has been imitated at different times, and in different languages, and finally, what may have been the result of these writings and of their spirit in the whole history of cultivation, and of revolutions in the world, so far as known to us.

This annunciation, it is hoped, will be received not as ambitious pretension and high-sounding phrase, but simply as the purpose, which the author of the work has ventured to form and place before him. In *magnis voluisse sat est*, is here his chosen motto.

THE AUTHOR.





## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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The foregoing annunciation of the plan of the work, supersedes the necessity of dwelling at large upon it in this place. I shall, therefore, only state briefly how it is carried out in this first part.

The general purpose of the work, required that this part should embrace the general and characteristick traits of Hebrew poetry, which mark its essential outlines, its cosmology, the most ancient conceptions of God, of Providence, of Angels, of the Elohim, and of the Cherubim, and individual objects, and poetical representations of nature. With these, it must contain also, especially, the traditions of the patriarchs, which, as among all nations, so peculiarly among this people, were the source from which were derived all the peculiarities of their modes of thinking, consequently also the genius of their poetry. To set forth these, and unfold them correctly, was here so much the more necessary, since most traditions of this kind have themselves more or less of poetical colouring, and what is worse, are often greatly misapprehended. In doing this, I have aimed as much as possible at brevity, have endeavoured not unnecessarily to say for the hundredth time, what had been repeated ninety-nine times already, and where on account of the connexion I was obliged to do so, have passed over it as briefly

as possible ; for where in common-place matters we cannot read with interest, we can much less write with it.

I sought, therefore, rather to set in their true light, the obscure and misinterpreted histories of Paradise, of the fall, of the tower of Babel, of the wrestling with the Elohim, &c., together with particular mythological representations, and personifications, which show most clearly the character of Hebrew poetry, and will at the same time prove of the greatest service to us hereafter ; for before one can say much, either of the beauty or deformity of an object, he must first learn to understand it. A right understanding of words, of figurative language, and of things, will give, without long discourses and a tedious explication of it, the conception of beauty to one who has the capability of emotion. To one who is destitute of this, it can hardly be communicated by exclamations, and repetitions of similar passages from other poets, and much less by abstract discussions respecting the nature of poetry, and its various kinds. From all this, therefore, the present work will be free.

If I have occupied as much as I could of the work with the translation of select passages, no one, I hope, will think it too much, for these are in fact, the very purpose and subject of the work. They are the stars in an otherwise empty space. They are the fruit, and my book is only the shell. Could I have succeeded fairly in setting forth the specimens which I have here given, in all their ancient dignity and simplicity, I should not, at the least, have failed altogether of my aim ; for in regard to this, I am of Luther's opinion, " that we must let the Prophets sit as teachers, and at

their feet listen with humility to what they say, and not say what they must hear," as if we were their teachers. In this early period, the Book of Job was especially appropriate to my purpose, and I only wish that I may have expressed something of that which my own soul felt in the study of this sublime, simple, and perhaps most ancient of all regular compositions. *Ardua res est, vetustis novitatem dare, novis auctoritatem, obsoletis nitorem, obscuris lucem, fastiditis gratiam, dubiis fidem, omnibus vero naturam et naturæ suæ omnia.* Something of this I would have attained, in what I have said of the patriarchs, of Job, and of Moses. With mere learning and the characters of a foreign language, I could not consent to burden my pages. To the unlearned they are of no use, and the scholar who has the original language and the ancient translations at hand, can easily accommodate himself with them; for him indeed, especially for the young scholar, it is a source of pleasure to supply for himself the grounds of the opinions which he is taught, and to have something left for him to search out, to compare, and weigh by his own reflections. Hence, I have availed myself of the rich helps of more recent philologists, where I could do so, without making a display of it, or seeking credit by disputing them. To those whose aid I have experienced, my silent use of it will be my thank-offering; and where I could not adopt their opinion, there—I had my own opinion.

And in order to advance this always in the mildest terms, and in the clearest light, I have chosen the form of dialogue, though unusual, I am aware, in subjects of this sort. How difficult it was for me, too, I know very well, and to have aspired to rival the graces

of the dialogues of Plato, of Lord Shaftsbury, of Diderot, and of Lessing, would have been, in treating such matters, and with such aims, the extreme of folly. Here was no opportunity for devising interesting situations, nor for unfolding new characters, nor finally for artfully drawing out thoughts from the mind of the respondent, in which the greatest art especially of didactick dialogue consists. The aim here was not to invent in general, but to elucidate, to exhibit, and point out to view, to find what is already before us. The only speakers admissible, therefore, are the demonstrator, and he to whom he demonstrates, friend with friend, teacher and scholar. My pattern for the general plan of the dialogue was not Plato, but the book of Corsi, or indeed the catechism.

But why then did I choose the form of dialogue? From more than one cause. First, and more especially for the sake of brevity. In the dialogue a single letter, the index of a new train of thought, a brief *how?* or *whence?* expresses what in the systematick form would require periods or half pages. Thus I am spared such tedious forms of expression, and such transitions as "it may be said on the other hand" &c. In the second place, I might in this way be able to escape the uniform, peremptory, or controversial tone, of the professorial chair or of the pulpit, which otherwise could scarcely be avoided throughout the work, on a subject of this sort. A dialogue, even in the worst style, gives to the subject animation, variety, and human interest, if only it do not (as was often the case here,) treat of matters that are too dry, and continue too long. In the third place, I escaped, for which I am heartily thankful, the necessity of contra-

diction, of strife, and of numberless citations, and thus avoided a very serious evil. In the form which I have adopted, the speakers are Alciphron and Euthyphron. The former speaks very much such sentiments as are uttered by the publick with its hundred heads, but they speak to one another alone, teach and controvert nobody in the world besides themselves. Whoever does not agree with Euthyphron, may retain the opinion of Alciphron, or—have his own opinion. Finally, I venture to confess, that the older I become, the more difficult for me is the tone of an instructor. Whom does one teach, moreover, when he teaches the publick as a mass? Where does this publick dwell? and in what style should we address it, that we may neither assume too lofty nor sink to too humble a tone? Here two individuals speak, and whoever will, may listen, improve what they say, and be either learner or teacher.

Let me venture to say, however, whom I would most gladly choose for readers of this work. Alciphron is a youth; he studies this poetry not from compulsion, not from the necessity of his profession, or of bread, but from a love of it. Young men then like him, and lovers of Scripture, lovers of the most ancient, the most simple, perhaps of the most truly heart-felt poetry in the world; lovers, in a word of the most ancient records of the human mind and heart,—unbiased, fresh, and ardent men of the same character, I would choose before all others for my readers. Of the childhood and youth of the human race, we can best speak with children and youth. The times antecedent to the Mosaick bond-service those feel with most congeniality whom the yoke of rules has never oppres-

sed, and in whom the dawn of the world harmonizes with the dawning of their own souls. If my book contains any thing of worth, he is my best friend, who without either praise or censure procures for it readers of this description. Each one can always omit, what does not suit his taste, and for this purpose the contents of the dialogues are prefixed to them.

And if, as I could wish, there be among these youth, those engaged in the study of theology, I venture to say a word more particularly to them. The basis of theology is the Bible, and that of the New Testament is the Old. It is impossible to understand the former aright without a previous understanding of the latter ; for Christianity proceeded from Judaism, and the genius of the language is in both books the same. And this genius of the language we can no where study better, that is, with more truth, depth, comprehensiveness, and satisfaction, than in its poetry, and indeed, as far as possible, in its most ancient poetry. It produces a false impression and misleads the young theologian to commend to him the New Testament to the exclusion of the Old. Without this, that can never be understood in a scholar-like and satisfactory manner. In the Old Testament we find as an aid to this, a rich interchange of history, of figurative representation, of characters, and of scenery ; and we see in it the many coloured dawn, the beautiful going forth of the sun in his milder radiance. In the New Testament it stands in the highest heavens, and in meridian splendour, and every one knows which period of the day to the natural eye of sense imparts most life and strength. Let the scholar then study the Old Testament, even if it be only as a human book full of ancient poetry, with

kindred feeling and affection, and thus will the New come forth to us of itself in its purity, its sublime glory, and more than earthly beauty. Let a man gather into his own mind, the abundant riches of the former, and he will be in the latter also, none of those smatterers, who, barren, and without taste or feeling, desecrate these sacred things.

*Weimar, April 9th, 1782.*

HERDER.





## DIALOGUE I.

**PREJUDICES** against the poetry and language of the Hebrews. Causes of these. The language full of action and animation from the mode of forming its verbs. Importance of this to its poetical character. Its nouns also express action. The want of adjectives supplied by multiplicity of names. In what classes of objects these are to be sought. Names of the productions of nature, synonyms, numerals, words relating to ornament and luxury derived from the neighbouring nations. Reasons why the Hebrew was not developed in the same manner as the Arabick. Of the roots of verbs. They combine sensuous form and feeling. Organic formation of words in Northern and Southern nations. Of derivation from radical words. Wish for a lexicon formed on philosophical principles. Of the tenses of Hebrew verbs and their poetical character. Conjunction of many ideas in one word. Significancy of Hebrew letters. How to be decyphered. Of parallelism. Founded in that correspondence of quantity which pleases the ear. Of parallelism in Greek metre. How far it lies in the nature of language and feeling. Something analogous even among the Northern nations. Causes of its peculiarity in the Hebrew language. Its influence and use. Whether the language had originally its present number of regular conjugations. Study of it as a poetical language. Study of its poetry.

**ALCIPHON.** So I find you still devoted to the study of this poor and barbarous language! A proof how much early impressions can effect, and how indispensably necessary it is, that our young minds be kept clear of the rubbish of antiquity. There is afterwards no hope of deliverance.

**EUTHYPHRON.** You speak like one of our modern illuminators, who would free men not only from the prejudices of childhood, but if possible from childhood itself. Do you know any thing of this barren and barbarous language? What are the grounds of your opinion concerning it?

A. I know enough of it to my sorrow. It was the form of my childhood, and I am still haunted with the recollection of it, when in the study of theology, of philosophy, of history, and of what not, I hear the echo of its sublime nonsense. The rattling of ancient cymbals and kettle-drums, in short, the whole music-band of savage nations, which you love to denominate the oriental parallelism, is still ringing in my ears. I still see David dancing before the Ark of the covenant, or the prophets summoning a player, that they may feel his inspirations.

E. You seem then to have become acquainted with the language, but to have studied it with no very good will.

A. I cannot help that; it is enough that I studied it methodically with all the rules of Dantz. I could cite the rules, but never knew their meaning.

E. So much the worse, and I comprehend now the reason of your disgust. But my dear Sir, shall we permit ourselves to hate a science, which we have the misfortune to learn at first under a bad form? Would you judge a man by his dress alone? And that too when the dress is not his own, but forced upon him?

A. By no means, and I am ready to abandon all prejudices, so soon as you will shew them to be such. This, however, I think will be difficult, for I have pretty well tried both the language and its contents.

E. We will make the experiment, and one of us will become the teacher of the other. Truth is, indeed, to be bewailed, if men can never be at one respecting it. For myself I would execrate the impressions of my youth, if they must bind me through life with the fetters of a slave. But be assured, I have no youthful impressions from the poetical spirit of this language; I learned it as you did. It was long before I acquired a taste for its beauties, and only by degrees that I came to consider it, as I now do, a sacred language, the source of our most precious knowledge, and of that early

cultivation, which extending over but a small portion of the earth, came to us gratuitously and unsought.

A. You are driving at an apotheosis, at once.

E. At no such thing: we will consider it as a human language, and its contents as merely human. Nay, more, to give you better assurance of my perfect fairness, we will speak of it only as an instrument of ancient poetry. Are you pleased with this subject? It has at least nothing insidious.

A. Certainly nothing, and with such a discussion I should be delighted in the highest degree. I am glad to converse of ancient languages, when they are treated only in relation to men. They are the form, in which human thoughts are moulded more or less perfectly. They exhibit the most distinguishing traits of character, and the manner in which objects are contemplated by different nations. Comparison of one with another in these points is always instructive. Proceed then to discuss the dialect, even of these Eastern Hurons. Their poverty may at least enrich us, and conduct us to thoughts of our own.

E. What do you consider most essential to a poetical language? No matter whether it belong to the Hurons or Otaheitans. Is it not action, imagery, passion, musick, rhythm?

A. Undoubtedly.

E. And the language that exhibits these in the highest perfection is most peculiarly poetical. Now you are aware, that the languages of people but partially cultivated may have this character in a high degree, and are in fact in this particular superior to many of the too refined modern languages. I need not remind you among what people Ossian, or at what period even the Grecian Homer sang.

A. It does not follow from this, that every savage race has its Homer and Ossian.

E. Perhaps many have even more, exclusively indeed for themselves, and not for the language of other nations. In

order to judge of a nation, we must live in their time, in their own country, must adopt their modes of thinking and feeling, must see, how they lived, how they were educated, what scenes they looked upon, what were the objects of their affection and passion, the character of their atmosphere, their skies, the structure of their organs, their dances and their music. All this too we must learn to think of not as strangers or enemies, but as their brothers and compatriots, and then ask, whether in their own kind, and for their peculiar wants, they had an Homer or an Ossian. You know in regard to how few nations we have instituted or are even now prepared to institute an inquiry of this kind. With regard to the Hebrews we can do it. Their poetry is in our hands.

A. But what poetry! and in what a language! How imperfect is it! how poor in proper terms and definitely expressed relations! How unfixed and uncertain are the tenses of the verbs! One never knows whether the time referred to by them be to day or yesterday, a thousand years ago, or a thousand years to come. Adjectives, so important in description, it scarcely has at all, and must supply their place by beggarly combinations. How uncertain and far-fetched is the signification of their radical words, how forced and unnatural the derivations from them! Hence the frightful forms of the catachresis, the far sought images, the monstrous combinations of ideas the most heterogeneous. The parallelism is monotonous, an everlasting tautology, that, without a metrical arrangement of words and syllables, after all very imperfectly satisfies the ear. *Aures perpetuis tautologiis lædunt*, says one of those best acquainted with them, *Orienti jucundis, Europæ invisis, prudentioribus stomachaturis, dormitaturis reliquis*. And he says the truth. This is observable in all the psalms and productions, that breathe the spirit of this language. Finally, it had no vowels, for these are a more modern invention. It stands as a lifeless and senseless hieroglyph, very often without any key or certain index of its

meaning, at all events without any certain expression of pronunciation and knowledge of its ancient rhythm. What do you find here of Homer and Ossian? As well look for them in Mexico, or upon the sculptured rocks of Arabia.

E. I thank you for the beautiful sketch you have traced out for our conversation. You have brought forward the rich materials, and that too with the reflection, and fine arrangement, that might be expected from one skilled in many languages. Let us proceed first to consider the structure of the language. Did you not say, that action and vivid imagery was the essence of poetry? and what part of speech paints or sets forth action itself to view, the noun, or verb?

A. The verb.

E. So the language, that abounds in verbs, which present a vivid expression and picture of their objects, is a poetical language. The more too it has the power of forming its nouns into verbs, the more poetical it is. The noun always exhibits objects only as lifeless things, the verb gives them action, and this awakens feeling, for it is itself as it were animated with a living spirit. Recollect what Lessing has said of Homer, that in him all is bustle, motion, action, and that in this the life, the influence, the very essence of all poetry consists. Now with the Hebrew the verb is almost the whole of the language. In other words every thing lives and acts. The nouns are derived from verbs, and in a certain sense are still verbs. They are as it were living beings, extracted and moulded, while their radical source itself was in a state of living energy. Observe in modern languages, what an effect it has in poetry, when verbs and nouns are still nearly related, and one may be formed into the other. Think of the English, the German. The language, of which we are speaking, is an abyss of verbs, a sea of billows, where motion, action, rolls on without end.

A. It seems to me however, that this abundance must always maintain a certain proportion to the other parts of

speech ; for if all be action, there is nothing, that acts. There must be the *subject, predicate, and copula*—so says logick.

E. For logick that will do, and for its masterpiece the syllogism it is necessary, but poetry is quite another thing, and a poem in syllogisms, would have few readers. In poetry the copula is the main thing, the other parts are necessary or useful only as accessories. Even should I admit, that for an abstract reasoner the Hebrew language may not be best, still it is, in regard to this active form of it so much the more favourable to the poet. Every thing in it proclaims “ I live, and move, and act. The senses and the passions, not abstract reasoners and philosophers were my creators. Thus I am formed for poetry, nay my whole essence is poetry.”

A. But how if they use nouns for adjectives likewise ?

E. Then they have adjectives. For every language has that, which it uses ; only we must not judge of it according to our own necessities. There are many names of things, which this language has not, because the people neither had, nor knew the things themselves ; so on the other hand it has many others, which we have not. In abstract terms it is barren, but in sensuous representations it is rich, and it has numerous synonyms to denote one and the same object for the very reason, that this object is always mentioned, and as it were painted in its multifarious relations with all the circumstances, that accompany it, when presented to the senses. The lion, the sword, the serpent and the camel have even in the Arabick, the most cultivated of the Oriental languages this multiplicity of names, because each of them originally represented the object under a peculiar form, and in a particular point of view, and these streams afterwards flowed together. In Hebrew too this superabundance of sensuous terms is very observable, and yet how few of them have we remaining. More than 250 botanical terms occur in the small volume, that is left to us, of the writings of the Hebrews, and that too in

writings of a very uniform character in regard to their subjects, and composed mostly of history and the poetry of the temple. How rich then would the language have been, had it been handed down to us in the poetry of common life with all its diversity of scenes, or even in the writings, that were actually produced. It fared with the Hebrews probably, as with most nations of antiquity, the flood of ages has passed over them, and only a small remnant, such as Noah could preserve in the ark has escaped.

A. In my opinion we have enough notwithstanding, for even in these few books the same thing repeatedly occurs. But we are wandering from our subject. I can very well believe, that the language, of which we are speaking, in the hands of another people, might have become rich and refined. How copious has the Arabick become, and the Phœnician too may have been rich enough in the language of trade and numbers, but for this beggarly race of herdsmen, from what resources could they form a language?

E. Whence the genius of the people called, and where their wants required it. It were unjust to expect of them the language of trade belonging to the Phœnicians, or that of Arabian speculation, since they neither traded, nor speculated, and yet all this wealth may be said to belong to the language, for Phœnician, Arabick, Chaldee and Hebrew are radically and essentially but one language. The Hebrew has numerals to an amount that we cannot easily designate, and a multitude of terms for the products of nature, as well as for the forms of fashionable ornament and luxury, with which they were enough acquainted at an early period. It was used in the neighbourhood of the Phœnicians, the Ishmaelites, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, in short of the most cultivated nations of antiquity, and as it were of the then cultivated world, and borrowed from all enough to supply its wants. Had it continued a living language, it might have appropriated all that now belongs to the Arabick, which can justly



boast of being one of the most copious and refined languages in the world.

A. The Rabbins have in fact made contributions to it.

E. Of nothing valuable however, nor in accordance with the genius of its original structure. When they wrote, the nation was sunk in poverty, and dispersed over the world. Most of them conformed their mode of expression to the genius of the languages, that were spoken around them, and thus produced a sorry medley, not to be thought of in a discussion like this. We are speaking of the Hebrew, when it was the living language of Canaan, and of that too only during the period of its greatest beauty and purity, before it was corrupted by the introduction of Chaldee, Greek and other foreign terms. Within this limit you will not refuse to give it its due, as a poor, but yet a fair and uncorrupted child of its native hills, the simple language of the country and of herdsmen. The finery which it has borrowed from its neighbours, I would very gladly have dispensed with.

A. In regard to simplicity I admit its claims with all my heart. This trait, particularly in scenes of nature, I have felt with the emotions of childhood. Still, my dear Sir, this characteristick seems to me too limited in extent to have much redeeming effect and recurs with too much monotony, nothing has compass; their poets are forever sketching, but cannot give the finer touches of the pencil.

E. Yes, I grant you, they sketch, as few of our poets do. Their productions are not loaded with delicate and overwrought refinement, but vigorous, entire, instinct with life and spirit. Of their verbs we have already spoken. They are all action and emotion. Their radical forms combine the representation of a sensuous image with the feeling of the heart. The nouns too, retaining the properties of the verb, are still active agents, and exhibit a continual personification. Their pronouns stand out with the prominence, that they always possess in the language of passion, and the

want of adjectives is so supplied by the conjunction of other words, that the qualities merely of a subject, assume the form of distinct individual agents. From all these peculiarities the language seems to me, I confess, more poetical, than any other language on earth.

A. It will be most to our purpose, if we conduct the discussion by means of individual examples. Begin, if you please, with the radical forms, with the verbs.

E. The roots of the Hebrew verbs, I remarked, combine form and feeling, and I know no language in which the simple and unstudied combination of the two is so much an affair of the senses, and so remarkable. Not so sensible and obvious, I admit very willingly, to an ear accustomed only to the accents of Northern languages, but to you, who are acquainted with the principles of formation in the Greek language, to you, my dear Sir, it will not be difficult to go a few steps further, and observe with a congenial feeling, the method more forcible indeed, but not therefore more clumsy, of forming words in the East. I repeat it again, in the most pregnant terms of the language are combined the sensuous form and the sensation or sentiment that it produces. The language was moulded and uttered with a fuller expiration from the lungs, with organs yet pliable and vigorous, but at the same time under a clear and luminous heaven, with powers of vision acute, and seizing as it were upon the very objects themselves, and almost always with some mark of emotion or passion.

A. Form and feeling, tranquility and passion, accents strong and yet light and flowing ! these are rare combinations.

E. Let us then analyze them and explain the matter more carefully. All Northern languages imitate the sounds of natural objects, but roughly, and as it were only by the mechanism of the outward organs. Like the objects they imitate, they abound with creaking, and rustling, and whizzing, and crashing sounds, which wise poets may employ sparingly

with effect, but which the injudicious will abuse. The cause of this is obviously to be found in the climate, and in the organs, in and by which the languages were originally formed. The further South, the more refined will be the imitation of nature. Homer's most sounding lines do not creak and hiss, they are sonorous. The words have passed through a refining process, been modified by feeling, and moulded as it were, in the vicinity of the heart. Thus they do not present uncouth forms of mere sound and noise, but forms on which feeling has placed its gentler impress. In this union of feeling from within, and form from without, in the roots of their verbs, the Oriental languages, I meant to say, are the best models.

A. Is it possible you are speaking of those barbarous and uncouth gutturals? And do you venture to compare them with the silvery tones of the Greek?

E. I make no comparison. Every language suffers by being thus compared with another. Nothing is more exclusively national and individual than the modes of gratifying the ear, and the characteristick habitudes of the organs of speech. We, for example, discover a delicacy in articulating and uttering our words only from between the tongue and the lips, and in opening our mouths but little, as if we lived in an atmosphere of smoke and fog. The climate, our manners and the prevailing custom require it, and the language itself, has been gradually moulded into the same form. The Italians and still more the Greeks, think otherwise. The language of the former abounds in full and sonorous vowel sounds, and that of the latter with diphthongs, both of which are uttered not with the lips compressed together, but ore rotundo. The accents of the East are uttered forth more ab imo pectore, and from the heart. Elihu describes it, when he exclaims,

I am full of words,  
My inmost spirit labours;  
Lo! it is like wine without vent;  
My bosom is bursting, like new bottles:

I will speak, and make myself room;  
I will open my lips and answer.

When these lips are opened, the utterance is full of animation, and bodies forth the forms of things, while it is giving vent to feeling, and this, it appears to me, is the spirit of the Hebrew language. It is the very breath of the soul. It does not claim the beauty of sound, like the Greek, but it breathes and lives. Such is it to us, who are but partially acquainted with its pronunciation, and for whom its deeper gutturals remain unuttered and unutterable; in those old times, when the soul was unshackled, what fulness of emotion, what store of words that breathe, must have inspired it. It was, to use an expression of its own,

The spirit of God that spake in it,  
The breath of the Almighty that gave it life.

A. Once more you have nearly accomplished its apotheosis. Yet all this may be so in relation to the radical sounds, or the utterance of feeling that was prompted, while the object itself was present to the senses. But how is it with the derivations from these radical terms? What are they but an overgrown jungle of thorns, where no human foot has ever found rest?

E. In bad lexicons this is indeed the case, and many of the most learned philologists of Holland have rendered the way still more difficult by their labours. But the time is coming, when this jungle will become a grove of palms.

A. Your metaphor is an Oriental one.

E. So is the object of it. The root of the primitive word will be placed in the centre and its offspring form a grove around it. By influence of taste, diligence, sound sense, and the judicious comparison of different dialects, lexicons will be brought to distinguish, what is essential from what is accidental in the signification of words, and to trace the gradual process of

them the whole is joined by way of prefix, or as a sonorous termination to the leading idea. This stands in the centre like a king with his ministers and menials close around him. Rather they may be said to be one with him, coming in his train with measured steps and harmonious voice. Is this, think you, of no importance to a poetical language? Sonorous verbs, which convey at once so many ideas, are the finest material for rhythm and imagery. When I can utter, for example, all that is expressed by the words "as he has given me,"\* in a single well sounding word, is it not more poetical and beautiful, than if I express the same idea in so many separate fragments?

A. For the eye I have sometimes considered this language as a collection of elementary paintings, which are to be decyphered, as it were, in a similar manner with the writing of the Chinese, and have often lamented, that children or youth, who are to learn it, are not early accustomed to this habit of decyphering or analyzing with the eye, which would aid them more than many dull and unmeaning rules. I have read of examples, where young persons, especially those whose senses were acute, have made great progress in this way in a short time. We neither of us enjoyed this advantage.

E. We may gradually acquire it however by employing the eye and the ear in conjunction. You will in this way too, remark the harmonious arrangement of vowels and consonants, and the correspondence of many particles and predominant sounds to the things signified. These are of great use too, especially in marking the metrical divisions, and denoting their mutual relation. The two hemisticks have a kind of symmetry, in which both words and ideas correspond in an alternation of parts, which are at the same time parallel, and give a free indeed, but very simple and sonorous rhythm.

\* As the German and English correspond in this case, in the number of words, which express the idea, I have translated the illustration. **Tr.**

A. You are describing, I suppose, the celebrated parallelisms, in regard to which I shall hardly agree with you. Whoever has any thing to say, let him say it at once, or carry his discourse regularly forward, but not repeat forever. When one is under the necessity of saying every thing twice, he shows, that he had but half or imperfectly expressed it the first time.

E. Have you ever witnessed a dance? Nor heard any thing of the choral odes of the Greeks, their strophe and antistrophe? Suppose we compare the poetry of the Hebrews to the movements of the dance, or consider it as a shorter and simpler form of the choral ode.

A. Add the systrum, the kettle-drums, and the symbols, and your dance of savages will be complete.

E. Be it so. We are not to be frightened with names, while the thing itself is good. Answer me candidly. Does not all rhythm, and the metrical harmony both of motion and of sound, I might say all, that delights the senses in forms and sounds, depend on symmetry? and that too a symmetry easily apprehended, upon simplicity and equality in the proportion of its parts?

A. That I will not deny.

E. And has not the Hebrew parallelism the most simple proportion and symmetry in the members of its verse, in the structure of its figures and sounds? The syllables were not indeed yet accurately scanned and measured, or even numbered at all, but the dullest ear can perceive a symmetry in them.

A. But must all this necessarily be at the expense of the understanding.

E. Let us dwell a little longer upon its gratefulness to the ear. The metrical system, of the Greeks, constructed with more art and refinement, than that of any other language, depends entirely on proportion and harmony. The hexameter verse, in which their ancient poems were sung, is in regard to its sounds a continued, though ever changing par-

allelism. To give it greater precision the pentameter was adopted and especially in the elegy. This again in the structure of its two hemisticks exhibits the parallelism. The finest and most natural species of the ode depend so much on the parallelism, as nearly to justify the remark, that the more a less artificial parallelism is heard in a strophe in conjunction with the musical attenuations of sound, the more pleasing it becomes. I need only to adduce as examples the Sapphic or Choriambic verse. All these metrical forms are artificial circlets, finely woven garlands of words and sounds. In the East the two strings of pearl are not twisted into a garland, but simply hang one over against the other. We could not expect from a chorus of herdsmen a dance as intricate, as the labyrinth of Dædalus or of Theseus. In their language, their shouts of joy, and the movements of the dance we find them answering one to another in regular alternations and the most simple proportions. Even this simplicity seems to me to have its beauties.

A. Very great undoubtedly to an admirer of the parallelism.

E. The two divisions of their chorus confirm, elevate and strengthen each other in their convictions or their rejoicings. In the song of Jubilee this is obvious, and in those of lamentation it results from the very nature of the feelings, that occasion them. The drawing of the breath confirms, as it were, and comforts the soul, while the other division of the chorus takes part in our afflictions, and its response is the echo, or, as the Hebrews would say, "the daughter of the voice" of our sorrow. In didactic poetry one precept confirms the other, as if the father were giving instruction to his son, and the mother repeated it. The discourse by this means acquires the semblance of truth, cordiality and confidence. In alternate songs of love the subject itself determines the form. Love demands endearing intercourse, the interchange of feelings and thoughts. The connexion between these different

expressions of feeling is so unaffected and sisterly in short, that I might apply to it the beautiful and delicate Hebrew ode,

Behold how lovely and pleasant  
For brethren to dwell together,  
It is like soothing oil upon the head,  
That runs down upon the beard,  
Even upon the beard of Aaron,  
And descends to the hem of his garment.  
It is like the dew of Hermon  
Descending upon the mountains of Zion,  
When the Lord commanded a blessing,  
Even life eternal.

A. A fine view of parallelism undoubtedly. But granting that the ear may become accustomed to it, what becomes of the understanding? It is constantly fettered and can make no advances.

E. Poetry is not addressed to the understanding alone but primarily and chiefly to the feelings. And are these not friendly to the parallelism? So soon as the heart gives way to its emotions, wave follows upon wave, and that is parallelism. The heart is never exhausted, it has forever something new to say. So soon as the first wave has passed away, or broken itself upon the rocks, the second swells again and returns as before. This pulsation of nature, this breathing of emotion, appears in all the language of passion, and would you not have that in poetry, which is most peculiarly the offspring of emotion.

A. But suppose it aims to be and must be at the same time the language of the understanding?

E. It changes the figure and exhibits the thought in another light. It varies the precept, and explains it, or impresses it upon the heart. Thus the parallelism returns again. What species of verse in German do you consider as best adapted to didactic poetry?

A. Without question the Alexandrine.



E. And that is parallelism altogether. Examine carefully why it so powerfully enforces instruction, and you will find it to be simply on account of its parallelism. All simple songs and church hymns are full of it, and rhyme, the great delight of Northern ears, is a continued parallelism.

A. And to this same Oriental source we are indebted both for rhyme, and the uniform movement of our church musick. The Saracens have the former and the doxologies have introduced the latter. Otherwise we should and might very well have been without either.

E. Do you think so? Rhymes were in Europe long before the Saracens, correspondencies of sound either at the beginning or end of words, according as the ears of a people were accustomed, or as suited the form of their language. Even the Greeks had hymns and choral songs as simple as our own church hymns can be. The Hebrew parallelism has however, we must admit, this advantage over our Northern languages, that with its small number of words it makes a more choice arrangement, and admits in the utterance a greater magnificence of sound. For us therefore it is nearly incapable of translation. We often use ten words, to express three of the Hebrew, the small words produce confusion, and in the end the piece becomes either harsh or wearisome. We must not so much imitate, as study and reflect upon it. In our languages the figures must be more extended and the periods rounded because we are accustomed to the Greek and Roman numbers. But in translating from the Orientals this must be laid aside, for by such a course we lose a great part of the original simplicity, dignity and sublimity of the language. For here too

He spake, and it was done :  
He commanded, and it stood fast.

A. And yet monosyllabic brevity seems to me conducive to sublimity.

**E.** The Laconic style is neither the style of friendship nor of poetry. Even in the commands of a monarch, we wish to see the effects of the command, and so here the parallel form returns, in the command and its consequence. Finally, the concise structure of the Hebrew language, gives to the parallelism generally something of the style of command. It knows nothing of the oratorical numbers, of Greek or Roman eloquence. From its general spirit it uses few words ;these have mutual relations, and, from the uniformity of inflection being similar, they acquire both from the position of individual words, and the predominant feeling of the whole, a rythmical movement. The two hemisticks correspond as word and deed, heart and hand, or, as the Hebrews say, entrance and exit, and thus this simple arrangement of sound is complete. Have you any thing further against parallelism ?

**A.** I have even something to add in its favour. For, in regard to the understanding, I have often been thankful for its existence. Where should we be left in the explanation of so many obscure words, and phrases, if this did not serve for our guide. It is like the voice of a friend, that tells you far off in the thick and gloomy recesses of a forest, "Here, here are the dwellings of men." But indeed the ears of the ancients were deaf to this voice of friendship. They followed after the echo, as if it were itself a voice, and expected to find in the second member of the sentence some new and precious sentiment.

**E.** Let them go, while we endeavour to keep ourselves in the right way. But in regard to this pathless forest I think you have overdone the matter. In the beginning of our conversation, if you recollect, you represented the language, as a lifeless hieroglyphick without vowels, and without a key to its signification. Do you indeed believe, that the Orientals wrote entirely without vowels ?

**A.** Many say so.

**E.** And say too what is absurd. Who would write letters

without any means of giving them utterance ? Since on the vowel sounds every thing terminates, and they must in reality be designated in some general way sooner than the various consonants, certainly when the more difficult task was accomplished, the easier would not be neglected, when too the whole object of the work depended on it.

A. Where then are these vowels ?

E. Read on the subject a work,\* which throws much light upon this, and many other points of Hebrew antiquity. It is the first introduction respecting the language and writings of the Hebrews, in which taste and learning are equally united. It is probable they had some, though few vowel marks (for those we now have are a later device of the Rabbins) and the *matres lectionis* are, it appears to me, a remnant of them. Grammatical nicety however, was not sought for in those ancient times, and the pronunciation was perhaps as unfixed as Otfried says, it was in the ancient German. Who has ever found an alphabet for every sound of every dialect, in which we speak ? and who would use it if it were found ? The letters stand as general signs, and every one modifies the sound to suit his own organs. A series of refined grammatical rules respecting the change of vowels, the mode of deriving the conjugations, &c. are, I fear, but empty sound.

A. And yet boys are tormented with them. I could never myself imagine, that a language so unrefined as the Hebrew could have so much regularity even in the import of the different conjugations, as young students are taught to find in every word.† The multitude of anomalous and defective words shows that it is not. The confidence in such distinctions, is derived from other Oriental languages, by which the Rabbins were fond of modifying this. They carried into the little Hebrew tent whatever it would hold.

\* Eichhorn's *Einleitung ins Alte Testament*, Leipzig 1782. Th. 1 S. 126.

† In a work on the origin of language, p. 30. Herder says, the more uncultivated a language the more conjugations.

E. Here again we must not go too far. It is well to have seized upon the technical artificial form of the language, and for us it is necessary, although it is improbable, that such was its earliest form, or that every Hebrew had the same notion of it. How few even of our authors, have the entire form of their language to its minutest inflection so fully in their heads, as never to commit an error? How much too, does the structure of language vary with time? It is well that we have at last found men, who are directing their thoughts even to the grammar of this language.

A. After all it appears to me, that every one must make his own philosophical grammar. He may omit the vowels and other marks now and then, and bring the conjugations nearer together. It is not necessary always, to go through all the seven changes of a verb, to learn its form.

E. He may become too, by this method, a second Masclef or Hutchinson. The best course is to have the eye diligently practised with the paradigms, and the ear with the living sounds of the language, and both habitually associated. In this manner one comes at the genius of the language, and makes the rules more easy. The language will then be no longer a schoolboy and Rabbinical jargon, but the old Hebraic, that is, a poetical language. The attention of the boy must be awakened to it, that of the youth rewarded by its poetry; and I am confident, that not only boys but old men, would hold their Bible as dear, as their Homer or Ossian, if they knew what was in it.

A. Perhaps I may also, if you proceed with me, as you have begun.

E. We will continue the discussion of the subject in our walks, and more especially in our morning rambles. The poetry of the Hebrews, should be heard under the open sky, and if possible in the dawn of the morning.

A. Why at this particular time?

E. Because it was itself the first dawning of the illumination

of the world, while our race was yet in its infancy. We see in it the earliest perceptions, the simplest forms, by which the human soul expressed its thoughts, the most uncorrupted affections that bound and guided it. Though we should be convinced that it contained nothing remarkable, yet the language of nature in it, we must believe, for we feel it. The first perceptions of things, must be dear to us, for we should gain knowledge by them. In it the earliest Logick of the senses, the simplest analysis of ideas and the primary principles of morals, in short, the most ancient history of the human mind and heart, are brought before our eyes. Were it even the poetry of cannibals, would you not think it worthy of attention for these purposes?

A. We meet again, you say, in the morning.

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## DIALOGUE. II.

**Dawn of the morning.** It presents an image of the creation of the world. **Earliest views of nature.** First feeling and conception of the Great Spirit, as a powerful being. Whether this feeling was a slavish fear, or brutal stupidity. Probable origin of ideas of the terrible in the religions of antiquity. Example of clear notions of God, as a God of power, and also as supreme in wisdom. Of the Elohim. Probable origin of the idea of them. Whether it gave occasion to idolatry. Necessity and use of the idea of one God to the human understanding. Service of poetry in confirming and extending it. Simple means to this end, the parallelism of the heavens and the earth. What the poetry of the Orientals gained by connecting them and exhibiting their relations. Its mode of representing God at rest and in action. His word. Early notions of the angels. Images of God as the ever active Lord of Creation.

The first rays of the dawn were not yet visible, when the two friends found themselves together at an appointed spot, a delightful eminence, that furnished a wide and beautiful prospect. They saw before them all the objects of nature lying yet formless and undistinguished, for the night had wrapt them up in its veil of obscurity. But soon the night breeze sprang up, and the morning appeared in its loveliness. Its going forth was as if the Almighty had cast a reviving look upon the earth and renovated its existence; while his glory accompanied it, and consecrated the heavens as his magnificent and peaceful temple. The higher it rose, the more elevated and serene appeared the golden firmament, that gradually purified itself from the subsiding waters, clouds and vapours, till it stood displayed, as an upper ocean, an expanse of sapphire interwoven with gold. In the same manner also the earth seemed to rise up before them. Its dark masses

became distinguished, and at length it stood forth like a bride, adorned with herbage and flowers, and waiting for the blessing of Jehovah. The soul of man elevates and purifies itself like the morning sky ; it wakes and rouses itself from slumber, like the virgin earth ; but at no moment is the delightful view attended with such sacred awe, as at the first existence of light, the breaking forth of the dawn, when, as the Hebrews say, the hind of the morning is struggling with the shades of night, and, with its head and knees bended together, waits for the moment of release. It is, as it were a birth of the day ; and every being shudders with a pleasing dread, as if conscious of the presence of Jehovah. The most ancient nations made a distinction between the light of the dawn, and that of the sun ; considering it an uncreated being, a brightness that gleamed from the throne of Jehovah, but was returned again, so soon as the sun awoke to shine upon the earth. It is the vicegerent of the Deity, behind which Jehovah himself is concealed.

EUTHYPHRON. Observe, my friend, the peculiarity and splendour of the view which at this moment opens before us. It was from this that knowledge first dawned upon the human mind, and this perhaps was the cradle of the first poetry and religion of the earth.

ALCIPHRON. You agree then with the author of "The earliest Monuments," but remember his views have been controverted.

E. So far as our purpose is concerned, nothing has been or can be objected to them, so long as the morning dawn remains what it is. Have we not at this moment beheld and admired all the changing scenes in this vast work of creation ? From the dark moving pictures of night to the magnificent uprising of the sun, with whom all beings in air and water, in the ocean and upon the earth seem to awake into being, the whole has passed before us. Is it objected, that the moon and stars do not come forth simultaneously with the sun ? Perhaps

too you may add with equal force on the other hand, that all the phenomena of the morning belong to every day, while those of creation are to be divided into the labours of six. But why waste our time with such discussions? Not only the first brief history of the creation, but all the Hebrew songs in praise of it, nay the very names of those glorious phenomena, that we just now saw before and around us, were for the most part formed, as it were, in the immediate view of those very scenes; and it was this view that prompted the most ancient poetry of nature on the subject of the creation.

A. When, and by whom, was such poetry formed?

E. I know not, for my understanding cannot carry back its researches to the cradle of human improvement. It is sufficient, that the poetical roots of the language, the hymns, that celebrate the creation, and fortunately the first sketch of a picture, after or in conjunction with which both seem to have been formed, are still extant. What if we, in our present interview, inquire into the earliest ideas, derived from the contemplation of nature, and from the connexion and progress of its changing and varied scenes, which are exhibited in this childlike and beautiful poetry of nature? We can hardly spend our morning hours in a more suitable manner.

A. With all my heart; and I am convinced, that to the great being who pervades and surrounds us, nothing is more acceptable than the thankful offering of our inquiring thoughts. The morning of the day will remind us of the morning of intellectual illumination, and give to our souls the vigour of youth, and the freshness of the dawn. In general I have remarked, that the poetry of every people is characterized by the influence of the climate, in which it is formed. A depressing, cold, cloudy atmosphere, gives rise to images and feelings of the same character; where the sky is serene, open, and expanded, the soul also expands itself, and soars without restraint.

E. I could say much against such a theory, but let it pass.



Those features of poetry, and those images, to which I wish now to direct your attention, are those which spring from the earliest and most childlike intuitions and feelings of the human mind, and are occasioned by the more obvious appearances and events of the external world. These are, every where the same. In all climates, and under every sky, night is night, and morning is morning. The heavens and the earth are every where spread above and beneath us ; and the spirit of God, which fills them, which gives to man his elevation, and, at the view of the glories around him, kindles up the native poetry of the heart and the understanding, extends to all its creative energies.

A. Begin, then, if you please, with the primitive notions of the human mind.

E. With what else could I begin, than with the name of Him, who in this ancient poetry animates and binds every thing together ; whom it denominated the *strong* and the *migh-ty* ; whose power was every where witnessed ; whose unseen presence was felt with a shuddering of reverential fear ; whom men honoured ; whose name gave a sanction to the solemnities of an oath ; whom they called by way of eminence, the Great Spirit, and whom all the wild and untaught nations of the earth still seek after, and feel and adore. Even among the most savage tribes, how elevated does poetry and sentiment become through the all-pervading feeling of this infinite, invisible Spirit ! To them the remarkable phenomena, and the active powers of nature, appear as the index of his immediate presence and agency, and they fall down and worship him. Not from slavish fear and senseless stupidity, but with the lively feeling, that in these manifestations of his power, he is nearer to them, they offer up, in honour of the great Spirit, their dearest possessions with childlike forms, and awe-struck adoration. This feeling pervades the history of all ancient people, their languages, their hymns, their names of God, and their religious rites, of which, from the ruins of the an-

cient world, a multitude of monuments and proofs will occur to your observation.

A. They do so, but the philosophers have explained this feeling of awe in a far different manner. Fear and ignorance, say they, have produced imaginary gods. Slavish terror and brutal stupidity have paid them homage, as powerful but malignant beings, in short as invisible and evil demons. In all languages religion employs terms of fear and dread, and in the Hebrew they adduce as proof a catalogue of the most ancient names of God.

E. The hypothesis, like most others that are brought forward, is not a new one, and I fear is as false as it is old, for nothing is more easily misinterpreted by frigid, and at the same time superficial thinkers, than unsophisticated human feeling. So far as I am acquainted with antiquity, I think I discover continually increasing evidence, that this feeling of reverential homage is, in its simple and primitive character, neither the servile homage of a slave, nor the stupidity of a brute. The circumstance, that all nations worship gods of some kind, distinguishes them from the brutes; and almost universally the feeling has prevailed, that our existence is a blessing, not a curse; that the Supreme Being is good, and that the service, which we ought to yield to him, must not be an offering of fear and terror, presented as to an evil demon.

A. But are you not acquainted with many observances that spring from terror, and have you never read the books of an author,\* who derives all religions from the desolation of the world by the flood, and fearful forebodings of renewed destruction?

E. Do not disturb his ashes—He was a superintendant of bridges and dikes, and so must ex-officio believe in a Neptunian philosophy. His books are so bad, his learning so full of uncertainty, and his imagination so confused, that they al-

\* Boulanger.

together very much resemble the waters of the deluge. But we will go upon safe ground, and admit, that the religion of many ancient nations had indeed a mixture of terror ; especially of nations who dwelt in inhospitable regions, among rocks and volcanoes, on the shores of a tempestuous sea, or in caves and mountain cliffs, or whose minds were impressed by some great devastation, or other terrible events. But these are plainly exceptions, for the whole earth is not a perpetual deluge, nor a burning Vesuvius. The religion of nations in milder regions we find mild, and even among those most impressed with ideas of the terrific, the existence of a powerful good spirit is never wholly given up, and still almost always predominates in its influence. Finally, all these appendages, the offspring of fear, superstition, and priestcraft, belong in fact to later times. The ideas of the most ancient religions, are grand and noble. The human race seems to have been originally furnished with a fine treasure of knowledge, unbiassed and uncorrupted ; but their degeneracy, their wanderings and misfortunes, have alloyed it with baser metal. But let us leave this tumultuous crowd of nations ; we are now to speak of one people, and of one language.

A. Of one, however, in which the most ancient names of God are indicative, not of benevolence and love, but of power and reverence.

E. True, these are the first impressions in relation to the incomprehensible Creator. Power, boundless power, is the attribute, that first fixes the attention of a feeble creature of the earth. He cannot but feel this, and his own comparative weakness, since his breath is in the hands of God, and his very existence but the effect of his will, his to us incomprehensible power. The ancient book of Job furnishes the clearest proof of this on every page.

• Well do I know, that it is thus,  
For what is a man, against God ?  
Even the wise, and the powerful,

Who hath withstood him, and prospered ?  
 He removeth mountains in a moment,  
 He overturneth them in his wrath.  
 He shaketh the earth from its foundation,  
 And its pillars tremble.  
 He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not ;  
 He sealeth up the stars in their dwellings ;  
 He spreadeth out the heavens alone,  
 And walketh upon the summit of the waves.  
 He hath made Libra and the polar star,  
 The seven stars and the chambers of the South.  
 He doeth great things, that are unsearchable,  
 And wonderful things, without number.  
 Lo ! he passeth by me, and I see him not ;  
 Before me, and I am not aware of it.  
 He taketh away, and who shall restore ?  
 Who shall say, what doest thou ?

Do you not believe, that this lofty feeling is the feeling of nature ? and that the more clear and comprehensively a people beholds in every thing the power of God, the more stirring and forcible will be the expression of it ? Even the wisdom of the God, whom they worship, by which he has formed not only the inanimate but the animate creation, is to them but a form of power, a vast ocean of intellectual energies, in whose depths they are lost. Do you not recollect an example of this in Hebrew poetry ?

A. You allude to my favorite psalm ; it shall now be also my morning prayer.

Jehovah, thou searchest and knowest me.  
 Thou knowest when I sit down, and when I arise,  
 Thou beholdest my thoughts from afar.  
 Whether I am going, or lying down, thou seest me,  
 And art acquainted with all my ways.  
 Before a word is formed upon my tongue,  
 Lo ! O Lord, thou knowest it all.  
 Thou hast shapen me in every part,  
 And placed thy forming hand upon me.  
 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
 5\*

It is high, I cannot attain to it.  
 Whither shall I go from thy spirit ?  
 Whither shall I flee from thy presence ?  
 If I ascend into heaven, thou art there !  
 If I make my bed in the abyss, thou art there ;  
 If I soar on the wings of the dawn,  
 And dwell in the uttermost sea,  
 Even there shall thy hand lead me,  
 And thy right hand guide me,  
 If I say, the darkness shall cover me,  
 The night shall be for day to me,  
 Even the darkness shall not hide from thee.  
 The night is clear to thee, as the day ;  
 Darkness and light are alike to thee.

For thou hast formed my inward parts,  
 Thou didst environ me in my mother's womb.  
 I will praise thee for the wonders of my form ;  
 All thy works are wonderful ;  
 My soul knoweth it well.  
 My bones were not hid from thee,  
 When I was shapen in secret,  
 Curiously wrought in the depths of the earth.  
 When yet unformed, thine eyes beheld me,  
 And in thy book was I already described ;  
 The days of my life already numbered.  
 How weighty are thy thoughts to me, O God !  
 How overwhelming the sum of them !  
 Do I number them ? they are more than the sand :  
 I awake as from a dream, and am still with thee.

E. You have contended boldly with the expression of the original ; but, to be frank, I confess the heartfelt simplicity of Luther, even when less minutely correct, seems to me more stirring to the feelings, perhaps because my ear was accustomed to it at an early period. Can you name to me such a hymn as this, full of the finest natural theology, from any other people equally ancient ? Here are the purest conceptions of God, of his omniscience, and his fore-knowledge, his intimate acquaintance with the human soul, his omnipresence, the efficacy of his purpose in our formation as in

the creation and government of all things, and that too set forth with energy and fervour. Even the thoughts, of which many modern philosophers make so much, that God in his being has no analogy with any created object, that night and day are alike to him, are in many passages, of Job, and the prophets ; and even in the simple word *holy*, that is, wholly incomparable, so appropriately expressed, that I know no purer Theism than prevails in these songs of praise.

A. But recollect to what period these fine passages belong, and that in the most ancient hymn to the creation, the Elohim still prevail.

E. Without doubt Moses found the term in this ancient picture of the creation ; for he, the great enemy of polytheism, and of all that might lead to it, would certainly not have introduced it.

A. Such is my belief, and he joined with it perhaps the word *created* in the singular to guard against the tendency to polytheism. But notwithstanding the primitive idea of Elohim remained still polytheistick. It was the Elohim, at whose wisdom the serpent taught the first man to aspire and who probably in the opinion of Eve derived their wisdom from the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The East, as you well know, is peopled with invisible beings, and has especially one race of refined spirits, which subsist on the fragrant exhalations of trees, wage war with the giant spirits of evil, and preside over plants, trees, flowers, mountains, even the elements, the stars, &c. Polytheism of this kind is suited to all uncultivated nations, and the rich imaginations of the Orientals could hardly remain free from it. To them every thing appeared instinct with life, and they peopled the universe with living beings. Such are the Elohim, the Adonim, and Schadim of the Hebrews, the Izeds of the Parsi, the Lahi of the Thibetians, (a name that seems to resemble Elohim,) the Demons of the Orphic hymns ; in a word, the most ancient spirits and gods of the uncivilized world.

E. Be it so if you please. Do you find any thing debasing in the idea, that a weak creature of the earth, like man, who looks with wonder upon the beauty of the world, and meets with no visible author of it ; who beholds every where power and wisdom, a self-regenerating and exhaustless creative energy, and becomes attached to particular objects of beauty should assign to these objects each its own invisible creator, preserver, and restorer ? To the bodily eye the theatre of the world is destitute of causes, and yet intensely filled with effects. How natural then for one to imagine to himself distinct and appropriate creative agents, of which, one formed this, another that fair work of creation, as a tree, a plant, or an animal, with perhaps a fond partiality for it, and a profound feeling of its wants, and the capacities of its nature for enjoyment. These creative beings maintained an affectionate sympathy with every part of the creatures of their power, and, according to the more common representation, transformed sometimes plants into their own form, and sometimes themselves to that of plants. The genius of each living product was believed to perish and revive along with it ; in short, these Elohim were then perhaps the Genii of the creation, but probably connected in this more ancient faith with none of those fabulous tales, which the later mythology invented for them. As the angels properly so called, of whom we shall speak by and by, came into vogue, these Elohim and Genii fell into neglect ; those stood around the throne of God, and were princes of heaven, these but the attendants and protectors of the lower orders of the creation, and so subaltern spirits. The later mythologies of the East have many fables respecting the relations and contests of these two orders of beings, telling us how the Genii secretly listened behind the curtain of the Great King in the councils of the angels, how they were watched, and punished, &c. If the origin of these representations of the Elohim was entirely as I have now described it, was it not innocent ? or could you have any thing to object to it.

A. So far as feeling and poetry are concerned, nothing at all. To the imagination, indeed, it is even a benefit. It places man in a world full of animation, where every flower, every tree, every star rejoices with us, has its own spirit, and feels its own principles of life. What pleases and improves the imagination here, however, may not be so acceptable to the understanding.

E. Why not? Even in the most ancient times this idea had among these nations no connexion with polytheism. From one of the psalms of David we learn, that the Elohim were spirits but little superior to man in rank and excellence, while at the same time the doctrine of the unity of God the Creator, cannot be mistaken in the first picture of the creation. This one doctrine too, as it seems to me, has given an elevation and truth, a simplicity and wisdom to the poetry of these Orientals, which rendered its subsequent influence, as the guide of civilization, a blessing to the world. It is impossible to say what treasures of knowledge and morality were destined to accrue to our race from the idea of the unity of God. He turned away in consequence from superstition, from idolatry, from the vices and abominations of divinely authorized disorder, and became accustomed to remark in every thing unity of purpose, and so by degrees wisdom, love, and benevolence in the laws of nature; to find unity in multiplicity, order in disorder, and light in darkness. From the idea of one creator the world came to be considered as a united whole; (*κοσμος*;) the mind of man was directed to its combined glories, and learned wisdom, order and beauty. The contributions of philosophy and poetry to the same end have also produced the most beneficial effects, especially the poetry, of which we are treating. It was the most ancient obstacle to the progress of idolatry, of which we have any knowledge, and it poured the first bright beam of unity and order into the chaos of the creation. Can you tell by what means it has accomplished all this?

A. What are they?



**E.** A very simple matter, the parallelism of the heavens and the earth. The works of creation must in some way be separated and classed in order ; the more unstudied, the more obvious, clear, and comprehensive the division, the more likely to be perpetuated, and this has been so.

**A.** Where ?

**E.** In this whole body of poetry, which I might therefore almost denominate the poetry of heaven and earth. The earliest picture of the creation is arranged after this model, and the division of the so called six days' work has also a reference to it. When the heaven is lifted up, the earth is brought forth also and adorned ; when the air and the water are peopled, the earth also becomes inhabited. The same parallelism of the heavens and the earth pervades all the hymns of praise that are grounded on this picture of creation ; the psalms, where all the works of nature are invoked to praise their Creator ; the most solemn addresses of Moses and the prophets ; in short, it appears most extensively throughout the poetry and the language.

**A.** And yet the division seems to me to have no useful relation between its parts. What is the earth in comparison with the heavens, or what relation have the heavens to the earth ?

**E.** It is one of the very objects of this poetry to contrast the boundlessness of the heavens with the nothingness of the earth, their elevation with our abasement. For this end the radical forms of the language employ all their descriptive powers and bold imagery. Do you recollect no examples of it ?

**A.** Examples in abundance.

Heaven is my throne,  
The earth my footstool.

**E.** An image so grand that I might add to it,

My limit is infinity,

Or, with Job might ask,

Wilt thou find out the wisdom of Eloah ?  
 Wilt thou fathom the perfection of Shaddai ?  
 It is high as heaven, what wilt thou do ?  
 Deeper than the abyss, what dost thou know ?  
 Its measure is longer than the earth,  
 And broader than the sea.

Here you perceive the notion of the boundlessness of the world of sense. Of that which we call the universe, these ancient nations knew nothing. The name *world*—*Aeon*—in later times gave to them the idea of every thing despicable, worthless, and evanescent. The heavens grow old, and are changed like a garment, the earth is a theatre for phantoms, and senseless apparitions, and a burial place for the dead ; but it is the God of the heavens and the earth, who was before the mountains, and remains eternal as the heavens. He it is, who created and renews them, before whom the heavens flee away and the earth is scattered and dispersed in immensity like the dust.

A. But what, I must ask still, has poetry gained by this parallelism, that has no correspondencies ?

E. To me it seems to have gained much. By this it was led to compare the finite and the infinite, and to contrast immensity with nothingness. All that is fair, grand and sublime, is, in the imagination of the Orientals, heavenly ? the low, weak, and insignificant, is placed in the dust of the earth. All power descends from heaven : all that is beneath, by means of invisible but powerful ties, is ruled, guided, and disposed of from above. Above, the stars emit their everlasting radiance ; there are expanded the clear and cloudless heavens, and the sky lifts its azure arch in undisturbed serenity ; beneath, all is mutable, earth-born dust, and corrupted. The more the human soul connected the two, and learned to contemplate them together, the more its views became enlarg-

ed, correct, and marked with wisdom. It learned to define, to measure, and to number the earthly by means of the heavenly. It reached a point above the world, from which to direct and govern the world itself. Do you not believe, that mere earthborn poetry, however refined, must be necessarily poor and grovelling? All elevating and sublime poetry is by an influence from above.

A. Yet, let me say, it is mother earth that gives to all forms their characteristick outline, and consequently their beauty.

E. For that reason too, the Orientals associate the heavens and the earth together. From the former their poetry gains sublimity, compass, clearness, and energy, just as our souls receive the impress of sublimity when we direct our eyes to heaven. The heavens are the efficient cause, the earth the instrument and theatre of its effects, only not the perpetual theatre. Even in the formation of man the heavens and the earth co-operate; from this he receives his body, from those his living spirit. As the atom on which we walk is encompassed by the heavens, so the little sphere of our observation and knowledge floats in the immensity of the eternal, where all is glory, energy, and spotless perfection. To me that poetry seems great which holds us to the steadfast contemplation of what we are, and what we are not; of the high, the low, the weak, and the powerful; it would be false and delusive, should it give one part only of these opposite views, and mutilate, or withhold the other. All sublimity requires the boundless and immense, in short, the heavens; as all beauty and truth requires definite limits, that is the earth.

A. You have very well defended your parallelism, and I am desirous to follow it myself through the poetry of Job, the Psalms, and the Prophets, and know whether, as you say, so much that is great and beautiful is dependent on it, as to reward the frequent appeal,

Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak,  
And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

Show me now, however, in what manner the one God of heaven and earth is instrumental in poetry also in associating and binding them together.

E. He connects them at some times in a state of rest, at others in action. At rest, when, as an eastern king, he sits enthroned in the heavens, and commands the creation of the world by a word. And here again the first and most sublime parallelism of the two became the model for the manner of representation in after times :—

God said let light be,  
And light was.

This sublime language of God becomes in various ways, in the poetry of the Hebrews, the form for the most concise and forcible images, in which the style always is,

He spake, and it was done,  
He commanded, and it stood fast.

The more strange and obscure the object, which God commanded, and which obeyed his will, the more wonderful, and the greater the beauty which it confers:—

He said to the snow, be upon the earth,  
To the rain also, and torrents were poured forth.

One of the psalms, that is generally indeed interpreted in a too spiritual sense, exhibits a similar picture :—

He sendeth forth his word upon the earth.  
His word runneth swiftly.  
He giveth snow, like wool,  
He scattereth hoar-frost, like ashes.  
He casteth forth his ice like morsels,

Who can stand before his frost ?  
 He sendeth his word again, they are melted.  
 His wind returns, the waters flow freely.

Here the word of God is personified, as a messenger, as it often is by the Hebrews.

A. In that they do wisely ; for if the command and the effect are always to be repeated, their sublime poetry must soon become monstrous, and tediously uniform.

E. It is not wanting in personifications, for indeed all its employment of angels is nothing more. The most ancient idea was not, that they stood as inactive beings, and sung around the throne of God, but rather, that all the objects of nature at his command became angels and living beings.

He maketh the winds, his messengers,  
 His ministers, the flaming fire.

The book of Job is full of these personifications. The stars especially afford us one of the earliest and finest conceptions of angels, as the messengers of God. Their sublimity and beauty, their untroubled radiance, and ceaseless motion excite at once the idea of sustained delight, and the harmonious movements of musick, and the dance. At first they were the daughters of God, who encompassed his throne with joyful exultation ; soon they became his host of warriors, in splendid battle array ; and then they appear also in the form of his messengers and servants. In Job we shall see admirable examples of all this, and contrasted with them, his earth-born servants, sunk in comparative debasement. Thus the God of the Elohim, that is of the Genii and the rulers of the lower creation, is still in a higher sense the king of angels, and of the host of heaven, Jehovah Sabaoth ; although this was indeed an idea of somewhat later times.

A. Why so ?

E. Because in earlier times God was not thought of, as an

unconcerned and inactive king, enthroned apart in the heavens, but as a father and master of a family, whose busy agency was every where felt. As in the picture of the creation nothing was too small or insignificant to be beneath his creating power, so he daily creates and orders every thing anew. He daily stretches out the heavens, as when he first created them, and goes for this end on the billows of the ocean to the utmost bounds of the horizon, where he pitches his tent. Daily he calls forth the dawn, as he called it at first, divides out the rain, and opens the treasures of his household. He ties up the clouds, like leathern bags, traces out channels in heaven, and gives the lightnings his commands ; clothes the flowers and cherishes the plants, generates the dew, and provides for all beneath the sky.

Job and the Psalms are full of images, in which, as the ever active father of his family, no work, and no creature is beneath his care. What heartfelt interest, what wakeful and ever increasing confidence in God this must give to Hebrew poetry, is better felt than described. But not the Hebrew poetry alone ; all the poetry of the Orientals is full of praises of the Divine Being, that would be surpassed with as much difficulty, as the childlike confidence in him and submission to his will, which form the groundwork of their religion.

A. Is theirs a good groundwork however ? If God is thus concerned in the control of the smallest objects of nature, will not men become unconcerned and inactive ? If the hosts of God are every where encamped to relieve our labours, of what use is human effort and skill ?

E. Of this we shall have an opportunity to speak hereafter. At present the sun is in the heavens, and warns us, that our chosen hour is past. Go we then to our labours : the morning will return, when we meet again.

As an appendix to the German there is published here a hymn to the Deity from the Persian, to exemplify the remarks on the general character of this class of Oriental poetry. It is taken by Herder from an English work, "Specimens of the Institutes of Timour, by Hunter and

White." As it is not very necessary to the general object of the work, I have not thought it worth the while to retranslate it, and know not where to find the work from which it was taken.

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### DIALOGUE III.

Thoughts suggested by night and twilight. The state of unborn souls. Job's description of ancient night. Had the Orientals any idea of a chaos? Their notions of the most ancient condition of the earth. The Spirit upon the waters. Origin of the sensuous idea of Spirits. Voice of a nightly apparition in Job. First appearance of light. Its gladdening effect. Glowing pictures of it in the poetry of the Orientals. Personifications of light, and of the dawn. Poetical images of heaven, as an arch of waters, as a treasure house of all that is animating and refreshing; as sapphire, and as the tent of the father of creation. Poetical geogony of the Orientals. How far it corresponds to the natural history of our earth. Animation of plants. Its effect in giving a delicacy of spirit, and comprehensiveness of feeling to poetry. Why have the Hebrews no hymns to the sun and stars? Personifications. Beautiful and correct use of them in Hebrew poetry. Representation of the stars, as angels; as daughters of God, as an army, as a flock of sheep under the Supreme Shepherd. Particular passages respecting them. Of the lively sympathy of Oriental poetry with the brute creation. Of God as their universal parent. Why in this poetry brutes are sometimes put before man. Of men. David's hymn to the creation.

On the following day Alciphron did not fail to be punctual at the morning hour of poetry. We must not dwell to day, as we did yesterday, said Euthyphron, when they met together, on individual ideas, but I will direct you to a more general picture, and at the same time richer, than the tablet of Cebes. Is not one suggested to you by this fearful obscurity, in which all beings are at this moment involved, as if impatiently waiting for the light.

A. Do you mean the state of the dead among the Orientals?

**E.** That is not the topic, with which to begin our conversation. I was thinking indeed, of Sheol, but rather as the state of things yet unborn, which are waiting for the light, and hoping to find along with it unmingled joy. Recollect, for illustration, the night to which Job doomed in his imprecations the hour of his birth. There sleep unborn nights and days. God looks down from his elevation, and calls forth this or that as he pleases, and it comes forth with exultation to join the choir of its companions in the circular dance of the year.

Perish the day, in which I was born ;  
 The night when they said, a son is brought forth.  
 Let that day be darkness,  
 Let not God inquire after it from above,  
 And let no light shine upon it.

Let darkness and death-shade seize it,  
 The clouds ever rest upon it,  
 The blackness of misfortune terrify it.

That night ! let darkness take it away,  
 That it join not the days of the year,  
 Nor come into the number of the months,

Let that night be set apart by itself ;  
 Let no song of joy resound in it.  
 May those curse it, who curse the day,  
 Who can call up the monsters of the deep.

May the stars of its twilight be dark ;  
 Let it wait for the light, and light come not ;  
 Nor let it see the eyelids of the dawn,  
 Because it shut not up my mother's womb,  
 Nor hid evil from my eyes.

Where have you seen the ancient night to which this unhappy man consigned his birth-day, or the gloom of a starless, rayless, and horrible darkness, that waits in vain for the morning, more fearfully described ? No song of gladness cheers it, and its silence is interrupted only by the muttered spells of those, at whose enchantments the day goes not forth to



interrupt them in their works of darkness. You know how Shakspeare describes a night like this.

A. He does not yield to the Orientals. But you said something of the state of unborn souls. The passage you have repeated seems to me to have no reference to such a state.

E. The realms that contain them, however, are silent and formless as the night. They are shaped in the deepest obscurity, in the centre of the earth, and there wait the light, as at this moment all creatures wait for it. The hour of their birth is struck—God calls them forth.

A. The representation is remarkably adapted to the senses.

E. Like all the poetical fictions of the Hebrews. They knew nothing for example of a chaos, in which before the formation of our world the atoms that compose it, were driven about, as chance directed ; a fiction, for which we are indebted to the Greeks. In their minds its place was supplied by a dark gloomy sea, upon which the wind of the Almighty was hovering with an agitating effect ; and the picture, as it appears to me, is so much the finer for being true. Such was in fact the first condition of our earth, as the structure of it shows, and so it must have stood for ages, until, by the wonders of creation, it became inhabitable. This picture has something in it natural and conceivable ; that formless chaos has neither.

A. The spirit, to which you allude, that brooded over the waste and fathomless abyss, is to me peculiarly striking, and never fails to inspire me with awe.

E. It was to the Orientals the first and most natural image of that which constitutes life, power, impulse in creation ; for the idea of a spirit seems originally to have been formed from the feeling of the wind, especially at night, and combined with power, and the sound of a voice.

A. You remind me of the appearance of an apparition in Job. There is form and yet no form ; a gentle whisper, a murmuring like the voice of the wind, but with it also the pow-

er of the wind, the energy of spirit. It raises the hair on end, and rouses all the terrors of the soul. "It harrows up the soul with fear and wonder."

A word stole secretly 'to mē,  
 Its whispers caught my ear ;  
 At the hour of night visions,  
 When deep sleep falleth upon man,  
 I was seized with fear and shuddering,  
 And terrors shook my frame.  
 A spirit was passing before me,  
 All my hair stood on end.  
 He stood still, but I saw not his form,  
 A shadowy image was before my eyes ;  
 It was silently whispered to me,  
 How can man, &c.

E. There is as you say a form without form, silence, and yet a voice, and after all the powerful effect alone indicates the formless figure, and so it must be. The more closely defined its features, the feebler would their effect become. Form and definiteness are incompatible with our notions of spirit : it is the offspring of the wind, and must preserve the character of its origin. But look ! yonder come the glories of the morning. Let us leave the visions of night to their repose, while we adore the Father of Light.

Jehovah, my God, thou art full of majesty,  
 Thou art clothed with dignity and glory.  
 He putteth on the light, as a garment,  
 He spreadeth out the heavens as a tent.

When the first morning beam shot forth, thou, the creator, didst declare the light to be good, and didst consecrate it to be an eternal emblem of thy presence, and of thy divine glory, of all delight and purity, of all wisdom, goodness, and blessedness. God dwells in light, and his countenance beams with paternal goodness, and paternal joy. He enlightens the hearts

of all good men, and illuminates their path. In their original darkness he sent them the first ray of light, in the night of affliction and death he sends into their hearts a beam of unceasing joy and hope. As God, he displayed his glory in the creation of light, as the father of the universe in irradiating with its beams the souls of men, and leading us onward from this twilight of existence to brighter habitations. Is there any created existence, that would better deserve to be the garment of Jehovah, who, as to the essence of his nature, dwells in eternal obscurity? Light is his swiftest messenger, winged almost with the pinions of his omnipresence, and the emblem of Divine purposes and joys.

A. The poetry of the Hebrews has consequently fine imagery drawn from this source.

E. Perhaps no poetry in the world has drawn from it with more beautiful effect. The very name of light has in this language a lofty and noble sound, the emblem of all that is joyous and transporting. While it paints darkness in images of fear and horror, it places in animating contrast, the bright eye of day, the eyelids of the opening dawn. All the pictures of the dawn associate with it the idea of waiting, of expectation, of desire, and its appearance brings fruition. The morning star, which we see before us, is here a fair son of the twilight; for like every thing else, light and darkness has each its palace, its peculiar and inaccessible dwelling. The dawn appears in Job as a hero, who scatters the bands of misdoers, deprives the robber of the covering of darkness that protects him, gives to all things their form, and stamps them, as it were, with a new impression of his seal. From the womb of the morning dawn, is born the dew, her numerous host of glittering children. See you not there the fair mother before you, in that beautiful blending of light and darkness? observe too, how the Eternal Father is gradually expanding and arching over us the tent of his azure heavens.

*Light is the shadow of God.*

He sits above the circle of the earth,  
 The inhabitants of the world are grasshoppers before him.  
 He stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,  
 He spreadeth it out as a tent to dwell in.

But let us pass, if you please, to the mythology of the heavens themselves.

A. The Orientalists must have, I fear, great disputes to decide what Moses meant by his firmament between the waters and the waters. Whether it be a tent, an arched covering above, or a chrystal firmament on which the waters rested, it seems difficult to determine.

E. No disputes are necessary, for the pictures are all common, and, rightly understood, are also suitable and dignified. The most ancient idea is certainly not of a firmament or foundation of glass, since glass was unknown till a late period. The most ancient mythology represents the heavens, as an arch of water, and even the throne of God as begirt with darkness in the midst of the waters. In the celebrated song of David even it is said,

He stretcheth out the heavens as a tent,  
 He placeth amid the waters the arch of this dwelling.  
 He maketh the clouds his chariots,  
 He goeth forth on the wings of the wind.

Even at this late period we see nothing of the chrystal firmament, but a tent, a sublime palace arched over with the waters of heaven. Such also is the tradition of the Arabians—God called forth the heavens from the waters, and formed them for a habitation. The beautiful correspondence with truth too, in these representations, considered as pictures of natural history, is matter of wonder.

A. I have always admired it, and also the descriptions of the clouds, of the lightning and the rain, as peculiarly beautiful. The drougthy Orientals, seem to look upon the heavens only as a store-house for their refreshments, a sup-

ply of the blessings, which their earth so often denied them.

E. And they have clothed this beautiful idea in a variety of imagery. At one time he binds up the waters in the clouds, as in leathern bags, and their airy tissue is not broken. In them is the water of life for man and beast. At another he drives them, filled with the stores of his bounty, hither and thither, to refresh the thirsty regions of the earth, and pours them out with a profusion, that overflows even the deserts, where no man dwells, nor blade of grass springs. He is often described, as going forth majestically in these waters, passing from land to land, for its relief, and treading upon the swelling floods of heaven. There he has his treasures of waters, and traces furrows in heaven, and opens channels, by which to conduct them. Again he rends asunder his tent, and lets the rain descend, divides the heavens, or opens the windows of his royal palace, and deluges the earth with torrents. The last were probably conceptions of a late period, when God was represented as the king of heaven.

A. And was he not so represented at an early period?

E. Whether early or not, he was still earlier represented as the father of a family, who extended his parental care to man and beast. Observe the numerous passages of this kind in the Psalms and prophets. What heartfelt prayer for rain and refreshing waters ascend to heaven! How do all eyes wait, and the parched tongue, now animated anew, abound in thanksgiving! The finest images of the bounty, the universal goodness, and providence of God are borrowed from the rain and the dew. So also the most earnest prayer and cordial longing after God, are represented under the image of burning and consuming thirst:

As the hart panteth for the fresh fountain,  
 So panteth my soul after thee,  
 My soul thirsteth for God,  
 For the living God.  
 When shall I come to him,  
 And behold his face?

Images of this kind give to poetry a community of feeling and sympathy between brute animals, men, plants, and all that has life ; the Supreme and Eternal Father, is the father of all.

A. But how then were the heavens represented as solid ?

E. It was on account of their sapphire appearance, their glowing splendour, their unchangeableness, and their beauty. Perhaps the most ancient notion was, that this solid firmament was ice, from which the hail descended. The Arabs have pictures, according to which the lightnings are but sparks, that fly off from the sapphire firmament. Finally, when the heavens came to be represented as a temple and palace of God, this pure azure of the sky was the ground floor of his, and the covering of our habitation. To those who dwelt in tents, however, the idea of a heavenly tent seems to me to have been the greatest favorite. They represent God as daily spreading it out, and making it fast to the mountains, the pillars of heaven. It is to them, an emblem of security, of rest, and of the paternal intercourse and friendship, in which God lives with his creatures.

A. And how do they treat the earth ?

E. You will learn from their own words, if you go on with the psalm, in which David has given a picture of the creation.

A.

He hath established the earth upon its foundation,  
It shall not be moved for ever and ever.  
He hath covered it with floods, as with a robe ;  
The waters stood above the mountains ;  
At thy rebuke they fled,  
At the voice of thy thunders they hasted away.

Then rose up the mountains, the valleys sunk down,  
To the place which thou didst appoint for them.  
Thou settest boundaries to the floods,  
They shall not pass over and return  
To deluge the earth.

Thou sendest forth springs in the valleys,  
 They run between the mountains,  
 They give drink to the beasts of the field,  
 The wild beasts quench their thirst.  
 Above them dwell the fowls of heaven,  
 They sing among the branches.

Thou waterest the hills from thy store-house above,  
 From the fruits of thy works\* thou satisfiest the earth,  
 Makest grass to grow for cattle,  
 And seed for the service of man,  
 That he may bring forth bread from the earth,†  
 And make his face to shine with plenty,  
 Wine also that maketh glad the heart of man,  
 And bread, that strengtheneth man's heart.

The trees of God are full of sap,  
 The cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted,  
 Where the birds build their nests,  
 And the fir trees the house of the heron.  
 The mountains he made for the wild goats,  
 The rocks as a refuge for the conies.

E. With what a joyful expression that poet surveys the earth! It is a green mountain of Jehovah, which he has raised up from the waters; an Elysian field, which he has established above the seas for the habitation of his living multitudes. The series of images, which the poet has made use of, contain exactly the natural history of the earth. At first the waters stand above the mountains, at the command of God they shrink beneath. Now the mountains rise up, the valleys sink, as the waters rush through and level them. Finally God sets bounds to the floods, and makes fast the

\* With the fruit of thy work, i. e. with the blessings which thou createst. God is represented as the father of a family, always busy and providing for the earth.

† The production of bread from the earth is referred not to God, but men. He has caused seed to grow for them, that they may sow it and procure themselves bread. I have transposed parts of the 14th and 15th verses, by which they acquire more symmetry, and even the words a better consonance and arrangement.

earth—Then the fountains break forth in the valleys, the streams run between the mountains, where their beds are already hollowed out ; to them the beasts resort, and above them the birds sing, for the banks of streams were first covered with trees. We shall find in Job more sublime pictures of the formation of the earth ; more true or beautiful are scarcely possible.

A. And in truth whatever is most consonant to nature is most perfect in beauty. What are all the mythologies to me, if they teach me nothing ? What profit do I gain, for example, when the Northern Edda represents heaven, as the skull of a slaughtered giant, the earth as formed from his bones, and the rivers from his blood ? Poetry, in order to affect the heart and the understanding, must combine beauty with truth, and animate both with sympathetic feeling.

E. The poetry of the Orientals seems to me to combine all these. What sympathy for example does it exhibit with flowers, plants and herbs ? As it ascribes to all in a certain degree the principles of life, and more than figuratively personifies them, so God is represented as their father, who bestows his blessings upon them, who nourishes them with rain, and serves them with the breath of spring. Their restoration and the renewal of their verdure was a beautiful emblem of the resurrection of the dead, as their preservation was a memorial of his universal providence. The loves of plants seem to have been early remarked, and the palm tree, the cedar, the vine and the olive have furnished beautiful and sublime images to the poetry of the Hebrews—But this, alas ! is all, which they have furnished. Had we more of their pastoral fables like that of Jotham, or of the class to which the Song of Solomon belongs, what fine poetry and personifications should we find in them ! Perhaps more beautiful and diversified, than the dialogue of our own poet between the rose and the zephyr, or those in the Persian between the rose and the nightingale, the wanderer and the turtle dove. As



it is we must content ourselves with a single collection of such songs, but one that breathes throughout the fragrance of the rose, and brings back the musical notes of the turtle ; I mean the Songs of Solomon. But the sun, my friend, is rising high.

A. Be not in haste. Point me rather to some examples of fine personification and hymns addressed to the sun. The Hebrews I believe have none of these.

E. Hymns addressed to these, or to any other object of nature, this poetry could not have. It would be idolatry, and you are aware how conscientiously this was avoided. Job says,

Had I looked at the sun, when it shone forth,  
And the moon going abroad in its beauty,  
So that my heart had burned in secret,  
And I had kissed my hand for them,  
This would have been an abomination,  
For I should have denied the God of Heaven.

When this feeling was so sincere and earnest, no hymns to the hosts of heaven were possible. The Hebrew poetry guarded against this species of idolatry with the more extreme caution, because the Orientals in general were not so much attracted by any inferior idols, as by the king and queen of heaven, and to these their hearts were very greatly inclined. It became therefore a direct object of this poetry to represent the sun and moon as the servants of God, and to ascribe to him also all glory and truth, righteousness and beauty.

God said, Let there be two great lights in heaven  
To rule over the seasons.  
He placed them in the firmament  
To have dominion over the seasons.

They are kings of the world, but only subordinate to God, his representatives, his creatures and messengers. In these characters alone the Hebrew poetry has employed them.

A. It has used them you mean but little ?

**E.** Yes, much and appropriately too. The sun, moon and stars also were animated. They had their dwelling places and tents in heaven, as they still have in the minds of the Arabians and other nations. You know the beautiful passage, for which you may seek a parallel among the Greeks in vain.

For the sun he hath pitched a tent in the heavens,  
From which he goeth forth as a bridegroom  
Out of his chamber,  
And rejoiceth as a hero  
In the career of victory.  
He goeth forth from the end of heaven,  
And goeth onward to the end of it,  
And filleth the world with his beams.

The moon and stars also have their dwellings, in which when they are to be darkened, God seals them up, or in which they timidly shrink and hide themselves, when the glory of Jehovah appears. Thus in Habakkuk, for example, God comes forth in his war-chariot to conquer and divide the land ; the sun and moon come in astonishment to the doors of their tents ; his lightnings are shot forth, his arrows fly around him, and they hide themselves in confusion before the presence of his greater glory.

The mountains saw thee and trembled,  
The waters passed away,  
The deep uttered its voice,  
And lifted up its hands on high.  
The sun and moon stood still in their tents ;  
When they saw the brightness of thine arrows,  
The glittering splendour of thy lightnings,  
They hasted away.

A more sublime personification I consider hardly possible. All nature listens ; its swiftest objects stand still, its brightest are obscured. In the same spirit the stars are made the martial host, the exulting children of God.—Whatever is pure,

fair, and immortal, is compared with the stars, and the angels are often personified in them.

A. But for what purposes are these glittering hosts sent and employed ?

E. Those for which God employs his servants. The sun, as even its name indicates, is a messenger, but never the original fountain of blessedness and beauty. Even the nourishment of plants is not ascribed to it, but to the Supreme Father, who refreshes and waters them with the air, the dew, and the rain : it only brings about the seasons—a king of the earth, but in subordination to the King of kings. The stars as his army go out and engage in battle. To them were ascribed the water-spouts and the overflowing of rivers ; and in the song of Deborah they are beautifully personified in this character. In their character of angelick messengers they are capable of failure. He discovers them out of the way, and does not trust them with confidence. He finds imperfection in their brilliancy, and the heavens are not pure in his sight. But finally, when the future days of his own peculiar reign shall arrive, then shall the sun shine with sevenfold brightness, and the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun. That poetry, which so profoundly comprehends the nature of things ; which binds all the objects of creation together in such admirable order, and, in a sublime choral song, which represents God as the great shepherd of heaven, who knows and calls for the stars by name as his sheep, and feeds them under a variety of images on the azure fields of the sky ; who girds Orion, and consoles the nightly wanderer for the loss of her children ; who binds together the seven stars in their sisterly union, and hides his secret treasures in the South ; such poetry is the daughter of heaven and earth. When we come to treat of the book of Job, what elevated views of the stars will it furnish us.

A. I anticipate it with delight, and am for ever reconciled to the most ancient poetry of the world. I have been particu-

larly struck by its perfect sympathy with brutes, and the whole animate creation, and was delighted even in childhood to find, that it treated the brute animals (so called because they are dumb) as the brothers of man, who wanted nothing but the power of speech. The wild beasts it denominates living creatures, or the *living*, because the domestick animals are, in the comparison, as it were still and dead. I was delighted, when I found the voice and language of brutes so forcibly expressed in the language ; when the prophet coos with the crane and the turtle dove, and mourns with the ostrich in the wilderness. I rejoiced at finding the form of the stag, the lion, and the ox, sometimes their strength, stateliness, and velocity, at others, the acuteness of their senses, their habits of life, and their character described and painted in appropriate terms, and wished that in place of some of the sacred songs we had more of its fables, parables, riddles respecting the brute creation, in short, more of the poetry of nature ; for this seems to me to be among this people the most happy, and of the most perfect simplicity.

E. The name of God however must always belong to it, as a necessary accompaniment, for he is the parental head of this whole animate creation. He gives to every creature its food ;—all eyes wait upon him, and he lights them up with joy. The young and hateful raven does not cry unheard, and the wild chamois goat experiences his paternal care, and is delivered in her time of need. He lives as it were with every animal in its peculiar sphere, feels its wants, and fulfils its wishes, because he has given to all their natures. To him nothing is wild, nothing dumb and despised. He roars with the lion after his prey, and looks down from his mountain eyry with the glance of the eagle. The wild ass lives upon his pastures, and the hawk flies by his wisdom. His too is the great deep, the realm of monsters. The hated crocodile is the object of his paternal love, and behemoth is the beginning of the ways of God, the most magnificent of his works on earth. In short

this poetry is full of natural feeling, full of the universal providence and goodness of God in his wide empire. It was nourished in the bosom of nature, and cherished in the lap of our mother earth.

A. I now discover (what I have often wondered at with some perplexity) why it is, that in this poetry a preference is sometimes given to the brutes over men, and the ass of Balaam has more influence with the angel, than the prophet who rode her. In the book of Job, God is represented as delighting in the horse, and the lion, as being proud of behemoth and leviathan, but is silent respecting man.

E. It does not however pass over man with neglect; he is the image of God, the masterpiece of his works, and one of the visible Elohim here upon the earth. But of this at another time. Finish now your song of praise, and I will close with one to correspond with it.

A.

He made the moon to divide the seasons,  
The sun knoweth his going down.

Thou makest darkness, and it is night,  
In which every beast of the forest creeps forth;  
The young lions roar after their prey,  
And seek their food from God.

The sun riseth, they hurry away,  
And lay themselves down in their dens.  
Then man goeth forth to his labour,  
And to his work in the field until evening.

How manifold are thy works, O God,  
In wisdom hast thou made them all;  
The earth is full of thy treasures.

The sea too, so vast, so wide in extent,  
There are swarms innumerable,  
Living things small and great.  
There go the ships,  
There sports the leviathan,  
Which thou hast made to play therein.

These all wait on thee,  
To give them meat in its season;  
Thou givest it them, they gather it;

**Thou openest thine hand, they are satisfied with good.**

**Thou turnest away thy countenance,  
They are filled with terror ;  
Thou takest away their breath,  
They return back to their dust ;  
Thou sendest forth thy breath,  
They are created anew,  
And thou renewest the face of the earth.**

**The glory of Jehovah endureth for ever.  
Jehovah rejoiceth in his works,  
He looketh upon the earth, and it trembleth,  
He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.  
I will sing to Jehovah as long as I live,  
I will praise my God, while I have being.  
My song of him shall be sweet,  
I will be joyful in Jehovah.  
Praise the Lord, O my soul,  
Hallelujah.**

**E. I remain pledged for a corresponding specimen ; but since you prefer hymns, here is one entirely in the Oriental style. In my opinion there is indeed but one style in this class of poetry in all the living European languages, and that is the style of Job, the Prophets and the Psalms. Milton has especially interwoven it in the composition of his immortal poem. Thomson has trodden with feeble steps in the same path, and among us Kleist has very philosophically adorned it. For this style and this imagery we are indebted to the simplicity of the Hebrew poetry.\***

**\* Reference is had in the last paragraph to Milton's morning Hymn of Adam in the 5th Book of Paradise Lost, which it is not thought necessary to copy in the translation. Tr.**

## DIALOGUE IV.

**Transition to the book of Job. Best method of reading it. Descriptions of God, as judge of the stars, the creator of the world, the stiller of the tempest. Style and character of Elihu in his descriptions. Examples of his style. Discourse of God out of the tempest. Elucidation of its sublime pictures of nature. Of the poetry of nature in general. Whether it be a lifeless species of poetry, and undeserving of the name. Object of the poetry of nature. First means of attaining it, personification, animation. Examples from Job. Whether the most ancient times have an advantage over us in this respect, and why. Second requisite for this class of poetry, that it be the interpreter of nature. Examples from Job. Influence of the poetry of nature on the feelings. Third requisite, that it have an object and purpose. Illustrations from Job.**

WHEN Euthyphron enquired for his friend, he found him reading the book of Job.

ALCIPHON. You see how your scholar is employed, and it is hardly necessary to say, that I am reading this book with delight. I cannot yet indeed accustom myself to the long speeches, the tedious complaints and claims to innocence, and still less the vindications of Providence, which cannot themselves be vindicated. Of the guiding thread of the dialogue, I yet know nothing. But the descriptions of nature in it, the sublime and yet simple account of the attributes of God, and his government of the world, elevate the soul. If you are inclined to listen then, I will (as these people say) open the treasures of my heart, and read a few passages to you. I leave it to you afterwards to set me in the right way in regard to the plan, the antiquity and author of the book.

EUTHYPHRON. It is a very proper course for you to begin in that way of selecting particular passages. To read the

work continuously is for us perhaps too strong meat. We are accustomed to prefer brevity in the dialogue, and a more obvious sequence of ideas, than we find here. The Orientals in their social intercourse heard each other quietly through, and were even fond of prolonged discourses, especially in verse. They are pearls from the depths of the ocean loosely arranged, but precious : treasures of knowledge and wisdom in sayings of the olden times.

A. But of what time ? One must be surprised to find here so much intelligence, and furnished so abundantly with unpervverted impressions and ideas of nature ; and yet again there are other ideas so poor, so childlike.

E. Pass over, if you please, the considerations of time and authorship, and confine yourself to the work, as it is, in its poverty and its richness. Beyond all contradiction the book is from very ancient times, and I take it up whenever I venture to decypher its thoughts, with a species of reverence. My thoughts are carried to distant countries and remote ages, the ruins of the great revolutions that have taken place as well in matters of taste, as in the governments of the world. I listen to a voice that comes to me from a distance, perhaps of three or four thousand years, and instead of sitting in judgment on the book, or bringing it to the test of my own times, I say to myself in the words of the book itself,

We are of yesterday, and know nothing,  
Our life on earth is but a shadow.  
The fathers, they shall teach and tell us.  
They give us the language of their hearts.

Proceed then with its beautiful descriptions of God and nature. My ear is open, and listens with attention to the ideas of the most ancient of the infant world.

A.

Power and its terrors are his, 25:2-6  
He is arbiter in the heights of heaven.



Are not his hosts without number,  
 And his light prevails over all ?  
 Shall man then be just before God ?  
 One born of woman be pure ?  
 Behold even the moon abides not with its tent,  
 The stars are not pure in his eyes.  
 And shall man, who is a worm, be pure ?  
 A child of earth, a worm !

E. A sublime representation of God, the supreme judge of heaven ! the arbiter among the stars and angels. His glittering hosts are numberless, his splendour obscures them all ; his light, his purity, the truth and justice of his judicial decree puts them to silence. The moon with its tent disappears, the stars are impure in his sight. Then from these bright eminences we glance at man, and ask,

Shall man, who is a worm, be pure ?  
 A child of earth, a worm !

A. Your explanation of the obscure words, " He maketh peace among his heights, over whom doth not his light arise ? The moon pitcheth not her tent before him," pleases me much. I see the Eastern judge, who decides between angels and stars. How finely and poetically too is the darkened moon introduced. Its tent is gone from heaven, it has concealed itself from the presence of its judge.

E. Proceed to the remarks of Job ; they are better still.

A.

Whom helpest thou ? him who hath no strength ?  
 Whom dost thou vindicate ? whose arm hath no power ?  
 To whom give counsel ? one without wisdom ?  
 Truly much wisdom hast thou taught him !  
 To whom dost thou give knowledge by words ?  
 And whose breath dost thou breathe ?

E. To whom do you suppose this passage to relate ?

A. It seems to me to refer to God. Job means to say,

that God needs not to be vindicated by him, that his very breath is the breath of God, and that a helpless creature cannot become the defender of his Creator.

E. Proceed, I shall not again interrupt you.

A.

The shades are moved from beneath, 26 - 5-  
 The abyss, and those that dwell in it.  
 The realms of darkness are naked before him,  
 And uncreated night without a covering.  
 Over the wasteful deep he spreadeth out the heavens,  
 He hangeth up the earth upon nothing ;  
 He bindeth up the waters in his clouds,  
 And the clouds are not rent under them.  
 He closeth up his throne round about,  
 He spreadeth the clouds around him.  
 He appointeth a boundary for the waters,  
 To where the light is ended in darkness.  
 The pillars of heaven tremble,  
 They are shaken at his reproof.  
 By his power he scourgeth the sea,  
 By his wisdom he bindeth its pride.  
 By his breath he garnisheth the heavens,  
 His hand seizeth the fleeing serpent.

Lo these are a part of his ways,  
 A whisper that we have heard of him ;  
 But the thunders of his power,  
 Who can comprehend ?

E. A splendid passage, and, as you are turned poet, I will become your commentator. Job surpasses these opponents in the excellence of his effusions, as much as he has the advantage of them in the result of their contest. He paints only a single representation of the power and majesty of God, but he draws his image from the deepest abyss, and carries his picture to the highest point of sublimity. The realms of non-existence are spread before the Almighty, the boundless depths of vacancy stretch beneath him ; and as these were conceived, as we have before seen, under the form of a rest-

less ocean, he represents this, the vast realm of ancient night and unborn ages, as appearing before the Almighty, unveiling its wild abyss, and the horrid commotion of its billows. The shades tremble, the shapeless forms of future being are moved with expectation, the abyss, which never before saw the light, is without a covering. Now begins the work of creation. He spreads out the heavens over this dark and boundless deep ; he establishes the earth and causes it to rest, and as it were to be suspended over nothingness and vacancy. (For these realms of night and of the shades were supposed to be subterraneous.) Now he arranges the heavens in order, binds up the waters in clouds, and forms for himself the open expanse ; builds and adorns his throne in the midst of the waters ; encloses it around, and spreads the thick clouds as a carpet beneath it. Then he measures and designates the boundaries of the watery heaven to where the light and darkness mingle, that is, to the extremity of the horizon. Next his power is exhibited in the thunder, and still more to magnify the effect, in a storm at sea. The waves are represented as rebels, whom he drives before him, and can in a moment bind in chains. A single breath from him, and the sea is calm, the heavens clear ; his hand meets only with the flying serpent (either according to an image occurring in other passages—Ps. lxxiv. 13. Is. xxvii. 1—the monsters of the deep in the neighbouring seas, as the crocodile, or perhaps the flying and curling waves themselves, which his hand smooths and levels. Either way the picture closes with a stillness as sublime and beautiful, as the tumult, with which it commenced, was terrifick. And these, says Job, are but a single sound, a small part of his wonders.

The thunders of his power, who can comprehend them ?

Every morning, as day breaks from the darkness of night, every storm, especially at sea, brings the magnificent picture before us. Have you any other passage ?

A. Take, if you please, the laudatory hymn of the inspired Elihu, immediately preceding the final and magnificent response of the Divine Being.

E. Observe however by the way, that it stands there only as a foil to increase the effect of that response. Much as Elihu thinks, and finely as he speaks, he is still, as he himself says, but new and fermenting wine, that rends and escapes from the bottles. He has splendid images, but directs them to no end ; and the finest of them are only amplifications of those, which Job and his friends had employed in a more concise form. Hence no answer is returned to him. He prepares the way for the entrance of the Divine Being, and proclaims it without himself being aware of it. In describing a rising tempest in all its phenomena he paints, without knowing it, the coming of the judge.

A. I had never remarked this prospective design in the progress of the picture.

E. It is however, as I think, the soul of the whole, without which, all that Elihu says would be mere tautology. As the passage is too long to be taken entire, begin at the words " Lo ! God is great."—I will occasionally alternate with you.

A.

Lo, God is mighty in his power, 36:22  
Where is a teacher like him ?  
Who shall try his ways ?  
And who shall say thou hast erred ?  
Consider and praise his doings,  
For all men celebrate them,  
And all men behold them,  
But weak man sees them from far.

Lo, God is great, and we know it not,  
The number of his years is unsearchable.  
He draweth up the drops of water,  
Rains are exhaled upwards in vapour ;  
The clouds pour them down again,  
They drop upon men abundantly.

Who can understand the outspreading of his clouds,  
 And the fearful thunderings in his tent?  
 Behold, he encompasseth it with lightnings,  
 And covereth with floods the depths of the sea.  
 By these he executeth judgment upon the people,  
 And giveth also their food abundantly.

With his hands he holdeth the lightnings,  
 And commandeth them where they shall strike.  
 He pointeth out to them the wicked;  
 The evil-doer is the prey of his wrath.

E. All these images will occur in a more concise and beautiful form in the language of God, that follows.—The tempest is now rising upon them, and Elihu proceeds—

Therefore my heart is terrified,  
 And leaps from its place with alarm.  
 Hear ye! O hear with trembling his voice,  
 The word, that goeth out of his mouth.  
 It goeth abroad under the whole heaven,  
 And his lightning to the ends of the earth.  
 Behind him sound aloud his thunders,  
 He uttereth the voice of his majesty,  
 And we cannot explore his thunderings.  
 God thundereth marvellously with his voice,  
 He doeth wonders, which we cannot comprehend.  
 He saith to the snow, be thou upon the earth,  
 To the dropping shower, and the outpouring of his might;  
 So that all men acknowledge his work.

A. In the last words I like better the interpretation—He puts the seal upon the hand of every man, that is, they stand astounded and amazed, feeling, that they are powerless—a feeling, that every thunder-shower awakens in us.

E. The terrors of the storm are farther described.

The wild beast fleeth to his cave,  
 He cowers himself down in his den.  
 Now cometh the whirlwind from the South,

And from the North cometh the frost ;  
 The breath of God goeth forth, there is ice,  
 And the broad sea is made firm.  
 And now his brightness rendeth the clouds,  
 His light scattereth the clouds afar.  
 They wheel about in their course as he willeth,  
 They go to accomplish his commands  
 Upon all the face of the earth.

We must be Orientals' in order to estimate the good effects of rain, and to paint with such careful observation, the features and the course of the clouds.—It is obviously a present scene, which Elihu is describing in what follows—

Attend ! O Job, and hear this,  
 Stand and consider the wonders of God.  
 Knowest thou how God disposeth them,  
 How he kindleth up the light of his clouds ?  
 Knowest thou how the clouds are swayed—  
 The marvellous doings of the all-wise ?  
 How thy garments become warm to thee,  
 When he warmeth the earth from the South  
 Hast thou with him spread out the firmament,  
 That stands strong and like a molten mirror ?  
 Teach us what we shall say to him,  
 We cannot speak by reason of darkness.  
 Shall it be told to him when I speak ?  
 Let one open his mouth—Lo ! he is gone,  
 His light is no longer beheld.  
 His splendour is behind the clouds ;  
 The wind passeth, and they are dispersed.  
 Now cometh the gold from the North,  
 The fear-awakening glory of Eloah.  
 As for the Almighty, we cannot find him,  
 The great, the powerful judge,  
 Unspeakable in righteousness.  
 Therefore do men reverence him,  
 The wisest behold him not.

E. The consequence of the young pretender's forwardness you perceive is, that he shows that to be impossible, which

in the face of his declaration is on the point of taking place. At the moment, when he is convincing himself, that the darkness of the clouds is a perpetual barrier between men and God, and that no mortal shall ever hear the voice of the Eternal, God appears and speaks—and how vast the difference between the words of Jehovah and the language of Elihu! It is but the feeble, prolix babbling of a child, in comparison with the brief and majestick tones of thunder, in which the Creator speaks.—He disputes not, but produces a succession of living pictures, surrounds, astonishes, and overwhelms the faculties of Job with the objects of his inanimate and animated creation.

A. Jehovah spake to Job from out of the tempest, and said to him,

Who is it, that darkeneth the counsels of God  
By words without knowledge?  
Gird up thy loins like a man;  
I will ask thee, teach thou me.  
Where wast thou,  
When I founded the earth?  
Tell me, if thou knowest.  
Who fixed the measure of it? dost thou know?  
Who stretched the line upon it?  
Whereon stand its deep foundations?  
Who laid the corner-stone thereof,  
When the morning stars sang in chorus  
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

E. We forget the geology and all the physics of more modern times, and contemplate these images, as the ancient poetry of nature respecting the earth. Like a house it has its foundations laid, its dimensions are fixed, and the line is stretched upon it: and, when its foundations are sunk, and its corner-stone is laid in its place, all the children of God, the morning stars, his elder offspring, chant a song of joy to the great architect and the glad welcoming of their younger sister. Next follows the birth of the sea.

A.

Who wrapped up the sea in swaddling clothes  
 When it broke forth from the mother's womb ?  
 I gave it the clouds for garments,  
 I swathed it in mists and darkness,  
 I fixed 'my decrees upon it,  
 And placed them for gates and bars.  
 I said thus far shalt thou come, and no farther,  
 Here shalt thou dash thy stormy waves.

E. I do not believe, that this object was ever represented under a bolder figure, than that, by which it is here expressed, of an infant, which the Creator of the world swathes and clothes with its appropriate garments. It bursts forth from the clefts of the earth, as from the womb of its mother, the ruler and director of all things addresses it as a living being, as a young giant exulting in his subduing power, and with a word the sea is hushed, and obeys him for ever.

A.

Hast thou in thy lifetime commanded the dawn ?  
 And taught the day-spring to know its place,  
 That it seize on the far corners of the earth,  
 And scatter the robbers before it ?  
 Like clay the form of things is changed by it,  
 They stand forth, as if clothed with ornament.  
 From the wicked their light is taken away,  
 Their haughty arm is broken.

E. It is unfortunate, that we cannot more clearly represent the dawn, as a watchman, a messenger of the Prince of heaven, sent to chase away the bands of robbers—how different the office from that, which the Western nations assigned to their Aurora ! It points us to ancient times of violence, when terror and robbery anticipated the dawn.\*

A.

Hast thou entered into the caverns of the sea ?

\* It is still the custom of the Arabs to go out on plundering excursions before dawn.



Hast thou explored the hollow depths of the abyss ?  
 Have the gates of death opened for thee ?  
 And hast thou seen the doors of non-existence ?  
 Is thy knowledge as broad as the earth ?  
 Show me, if thou knowest it all.  
 Where dwelleth the light ? where is the way to it ?  
 And the darkness, where is its place ?  
 That thou mayest reach even the limits thereof,  
 For thou knowest the path to its house,  
 Thou knowest, for thou wast already born,  
 And the number of thy days is great.

E. Every thing here is personified, the light, the darkness, death and nothingness. These have their palaces with bars and gates, those their houses, their kingdoms and boundaries. The whole is a poetical world and a poetical geography.

A.

Hast thou been into the store-house of the snow ?  
 And seen the treasury of the hail,  
 Which I have laid up for the time of need,  
 For the day of war and of slaughter ?

E. A vein of irony runs through the whole passage. God fears the attack of his enemies, and has furnished and secured his vaulted treasury of hail as the armoury of war. In the clouds too, as well as in the abyss, every thing breathes of poetry.

A.

Where doth the light divide itself,  
 When the East wind streweth it upon the earth ?  
 Who divided the water courses of heaven ?  
 And traced a path for the storms of thunder ?  
 To bring rain upon lands, where no man dwelleth,  
 Upon deserts, which no man inhabiteth,  
 To refresh the wilderness, and the barren place,  
 And cause the tender herb to spring forth.  
 Who is the father of the rain ?  
 The drops of dew, who hath generated them ?  
 From whose womb came forth the ice ;

The hoar-frost of heaven, who gave it birth ?  
 The waters hide themselves and become as stone,  
 The surface of the abyss is confined as in chains.

E. Rich and exquisite pictures both of the heavens and the earth ! Above, the fountains of light gush forth, and the East wind scatters it over the countries of the earth, the paternal ruler of the heavens traces channels for the rain, and marks out their paths for the clouds. Beneath, the water becomes a rock, and the waves of the sea are chained with ice. Even the rain, the dew and the hoar-frost have their father and their mother.—And then follows one of the most beautiful and sublime views of the Universe—

A.

Canst thou bind together the brilliant Pleiades ?  
 Or canst thou loose the bands of Orion ?  
 Canst thou bring the stars of the Zodiack in their season ?  
 And lead forth the Bear with her young ?  
 Knowest thou the laws of the heavens above ?  
 Or hast thou given a decree to the earth beneath ?  
 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds,  
 And enter into them clothed with floods ?  
 Canst thou send the lightnings, that they shall go,  
 And say to thee, "here are we ?"  
 Who gave understanding to the flying clouds ?  
 Or intelligence to the meteors of the air ?  
 Who by his wisdom hath numbered the drops of rain ?  
 Hath sent down the gentle showers from heaven,  
 And watered the dust, that it might unite,  
 And the clods of the earth cleave together ?

E. The description of the so called inanimate creation is here ended. But in the description no part of creation is without life. The stars, that joyously usher in the spring, are bound together in a sisterly union. Orion (or whatever constellation Chesil may be) is a man girded for action, and is the pioneer of winter. The constellations of the Zodiack rise in gradual succession like a wreath encircling the earth.

The Father the<sup>2</sup> of heavens lets the Bear with her young feed around the North pole ; or (in accordance with another mythology and interpretation) the nightly wanderer, a mother of the stars, who is seeking her lost children, the stars, that are no longer visible, is the object of his consolation (perhaps effected by bringing forth to her view new stars in place of those that were lost.) One who by night observes the Bear in its course as if feeding with its young on the fields of the sky or the Zodiack, that, like a girdle with its beautifully embroidered figures, encompasses the earth, and rises gradually to view with the revolving seasons, and then reflects upon the times, when the nightly shepherds under an Oriental sky had these images continually before them and in accordance with the fancy and feeling, that belong to a shepherd's life, ascribed to them animated being and form—one, who does this, I say, will perceive at once the starry brilliance and beauty of this passage, although, as to its conciseness and symmetry, and the connexion of its parts, it can be but imperfectly translated. It is the same also with the passage, in which God is represented, as giving understanding to the darkness, to the roving clouds, and meteors. The personifications both of feeling and of form in poetry vanish in another language. Yet all these images, the sending out of the lightnings, and their reply, the going forth of God among the clouds, his numbering of the drops of rain, their gentle but copious descent at his command, are in the style of the most beautiful descriptive poetry.

A. You seem to be an admirer of this whole species of poetry—and yet our critics hold it to be the most barren and inanimate in the whole compass of the art. Some indeed will not even accord to it the name of poetry, and denominate it a heartless description of things and forms, that are indescribable.

E. If such be the fact, I agree with all my heart, that it does not deserve the name of poetry. Those miserable wri-

ters, who describe to us the spring, the rose, the thunder, the ice, and the winter, in a tedious and unaffecting style, are neither good in poetry, nor in prose. The true poetry of nature has something else, than a dull description of individual traits, to which in fact it is not principally devoted.

A. And what has it in the place of it ?

E. Poetry. It makes the objects of nature to become things of life, and exhibits them in a state of living action. Look at Job. Here the earth is a palace, of which the builder laid the corner-stone, while all the children of God shouted for joy at the event. The ocean was born and wrapt in garments, like a child. The dawn is an active agent, and the lightning speaks. The personification is kept up, and carried through with consistency, and this gives to poetry its animation. The soul is hurried forward, and feels itself in the midst of the objects described, while it is a witness of their agencies. Tedious descriptions, on the other hand, disjoin them, and paralyze their powers. They exhibit but a tattered dress of words, abstracted and partial shadows of forms, where in true poetry we see actual and living beings.

A. But who, my friend, could venture to write poetry in the style of the Orientals ? to present the ocean as a child in swaddling clothes, the arsenals of snow and hail, and channels for water in the heavens ?

E. No one should do it. For every language, every nation, every climate has its own measure in matters of taste, and the peculiar sources of its favourite poetry. It shows a lamentable poverty to attempt to borrow from a people so diverse, yet we must adopt the same principles, and create out of the same material. He, to whose eyes and heart nature has no life, to whose apprehension it neither speaks, nor acts, was not born to be its poet. It stands lifeless before him, and it will still be lifeless in his writing.

A. It follows then, that the ages of ignorance had great advantages over those, in which nature is studied, and becomes

the object of knowledge. They had poetry—we have only description.

E. What call you the ages of ignorance? All sensuous tribes have a knowledge of that nature, to which their poetry relates; nay, they have a more living, and for their purpose a better knowledge of it, than the Linnæan classifier from his bookish arrangement. For a general knowledge of species this method is necessary, but to make it the foundation of poetry would be about as wise, as to write it out of Hübner's rhyming dictionary. For myself I admire those times, when man's knowledge of nature was perhaps less extended, but was a living knowledge, when the eye was rendered discriminating by impassioned feeling, when analogies to what is human struck the view, and awakened feelings of astonishment.

A. It were to be wished then, that the times, in which those feelings prevailed, were again experienced.

E. Every age must make its poetry consistent with its ideas of the great system of being, or if not, must at least be assured of producing a greater effect by its poetical fictions, than systematick truth could secure to it. And may not this often be the case? I have no doubt, that from the systems of Copernicus and Newton, of Buffon and Priestley, as elevated poetry may be made, as from the most simple and child-like views of nature. But why have we no such poetry? Why is it, that the simple pathetic fables of ancient or unlearned tribes always affect us more, than these mathematical, physical, and metaphysical niceties? Is it not because the people of those times wrote poetry with more lively apprehensions, because they conceived ideas of all things, including God himself, under analogous forms, reduced the universe to the shape of a house, and animated all that it contains with human passions, with love and hatred? The first poet, who can do the same in the universe of Buffon and Newton, will, if he is so disposed, produce with truer, at least with more comprehensive ideas, the effect which they accomplish-

ed with their limited analogies and poetic fables. Would that such a poet were already among us, but so long as that is not the case, let us not turn to ridicule the genuine beauties in the poetry of ancient nations, because they understood not our systems of natural philosophy and metaphysics. Many of their allegories and personifications contain more imaginative power, and more sensuous truth, than voluminous systems—and the power of touching the heart speaks for itself.

A. This power of producing emotion, however, seems to me not to belong in so high a degree to the poetry of nature.

E. The more gentle and enduring sentiments of poetry at least are produced by it, and more even than by any other. Can there be any more beautiful poetry, than God himself has exhibited to us in the works of creation? poetry, which He spreads fresh and glowing before us with every revolution of days and of seasons? Can the language of poetry accomplish any thing more affecting, than with brevity and simplicity to unfold to us in its measure what we are and what we enjoy? We live and have our being in this vast temple of God; our feelings and thoughts, our sufferings and our joys are all from this as their source. A species of poetry that furnishes me with eyes to perceive and contemplate the works of creation and myself, to consider them in their order and relation, and to discover through all the traces of infinite love, wisdom, and power, to shape the whole with the eye of fancy, and in words suited to their purpose—such a poetry is holy and heavenly. What wretch, in the greatest tumult of his passions, in walking under a starry heaven, would not experience imperceptibly and even against his will a soothing influence from the elevating contemplation of its silent, unchangeable, and everlasting splendours. Suppose at such a moment there occurs to his thoughts the simple language of God, “Canst thou bind together the bands of the Pleiades,” &c.—is it not as if God himself addressed the words to him

from the starry firmament ? Such an effect has the true poetry of nature, the fair interpreter of the nature of God. A hint, a single word, in the spirit of such poetry, often suggests to the mind extended scenes ; nor does it merely bring their quiet pictures before the eye in their outward lineaments, but brings them home to the sympathies of the heart, especially, when the heart of the poet himself is tender and benevolent, and it can hardly fail to be so.

A. Will the heart of the poet of nature always exhibit this character ?

E. Of the great and genuine poet undoubtedly, otherwise he may be an acute observer, but could not be a refined and powerful expositor of nature. Poetry, that concerns itself with the deeds of men, often in a high degree debasing and criminal, that labours, with lively and affecting apprehensions, in the impure recesses of the heart, and often for no very worthy purpose, may corrupt as well the author as the reader. The poetry of divine things can never do this. It enlarges the heart, while it expands the view, renders this serene and contemplative, that energetic, free, and joyous. It awakens a love, an interest, and a sympathy for all that lives. It accustoms the understanding to remark on all occasions the laws of nature, and guides our reason to the right path. This is especially true of the descriptive poetry of the Orientals.

A. Do you apply the remark to the chapter of Job, of which we were speaking ?

E. Certainly. It would be childish to hunt for the system of physics implied in the individual representations of poetry, or to aim at reconciling it with the system of our own days, and thus show that Job had already learned to think like our natural philosophers ; yet the leading idea, that the universe is the palace of the Divine Being, where he is himself the director and disposer, where every thing is transacted according to unchangeable and eternal laws, with a providence, that continually extends to the minutest concern, with be-

nevolence and judgment—this, I say, we must acknowledge to be great and ennobling. It is set forth too, by examples, in which every thing manifests unity of purpose, and subordination to the combined whole. The most wonderful phenomena come before us, as the doings of an ever active and provident father of his household. Show me a poem, which exhibits our system of physics, our discoveries and opinions respecting the formation of the world, and the changes that it undergoes, under as concise images, as animated personifications, with as suitable expositions, and a plan comprising as much unity and variety for the production of effect. But do not forget the three leading qualities, of which I have spoken, animation in the objects for awakening the senses, interpretation of nature for the heart, a plan in the poem, as there is in creation, for the understanding. The last requisite altogether fails in most of our descriptive poets.

A. You require, I fear, what is impossible. How little plan are we able to comprehend in the scenes of nature? The kingdom of the all-powerful mother of all things is so vast, her progress so slow, her prospective views so endless—

E. That therefore a human poem must be so vast, so slow in progress, and so incomprehensible? Let him, to whom nature exhibits no plan, no unity of purpose, hold his peace, nor venture to give her expression in the language of poetry. Let him speak, for whom she has removed the veil, and displayed the true expression of her features. He will discover in all her works connexion, order, benevolence, and purpose. His own poetical creation too, like that creation which inspires his imagination, will be a true *κῶσμος*, a regular work, with plan, outlines, meaning, and ultimate design, and commend itself to the understanding as a whole, as it does to the heart by its individual thoughts and interpretations of nature, and to the sense by the animation of its objects. In nature, all things are connected, and for the view of man are connected by their relation to what is human. The periods of time,



as days and years, have their relation to the age of man. Countries and climates have a principle of unity in the one race of man, ages and worlds in the one eternal cause, one God, one Creator. He is the eye of the universe, giving expression to its otherwise boundless void, and combining in a harmonious union the expression of all its multiplied and multifiform features. Here we are brought back again to the East, for the Orientals, in their descriptive poetry, however poor or rich it may be judged, secure, first of all, that unity, which the understanding demands. In all the various departments of nature they behold the God of the heavens and of the earth. This no Greek, nor Celt, nor Roman has ever done, and how far in this respect is Lucretius behind Job and David!

## DIALOGUE V.

Descriptions of the animate creation in Job. Leading traits of his imagery. Where Job lived. Whether in the valley of Gutah near Damascus. Grounds for considering the proverbs of this book as the wise sayings, or the philosophy, of the children of Edom. Egyptian imagery in the book. Whether the author of it was an Egyptian. What extent and variety its imagery embraces. Whether beemoth be the elephant, or the hippopotamus. Whether Moses wrote the book, translated it from the Arabick, or found it with Jethro. When it was brought to Judaea. Whether it was imitated in the poetry of the Hebrews. Whether the historical introduction is as ancient as the book itself. Whether the Satan of this book is a conception of Chaldee origin. Of the juridical forms, under which Job represents objects both in heaven and on earth. Plan of the book, as a judicial process, and a wit-combat. Whether the friends of Job are distinctively characterized. Whether their several discourses, as put together, exhibit a connected train of thought. That the book is no drama in successive acts, but a consessus of wise men after the manner of the East. Whether it is founded on historical facts. Its poetical style and composition. Appendix.

**ALCIPHRON.** I am eager to proceed to the second part of God's address to Job. In this we shall find the brute forms also not only animated, but all become ensouled with human feelings. I will read, and then wait for your interpretation.

The king of beasts is the first to advance.

Dost thou hunt for the lion his prey?

The hunger of the young lions dost thou satisfy,

When they lie in wait in their dens,

And crouch under covert in ambush?

Who provideth for the raven his food,

When his young cry unto God,

And wander for lack of meat?

Dost thou know when the chamois-goat brings forth?

And mark the birth-throes of the hind ?  
 Dost thou number the months they fulfil,  
 And know the period of their bringing forth ?  
 They bow themselves, and give birth to their young,  
 They cast forth the offspring of their pains.  
 Their young ones increase in strength ;  
 They grow up in the wilderness ;  
 They go from them, and return no more.

**EUTHYPHRON.** The terrific cruelty of the lion, the hatefulness of the young raven, for which yet God provides, and its hoarse cry of distress, here so briefly described, all speak for themselves. The paternal tenderness of God also, with which he regards and provides for the wild chamois of the ~~ark~~ <sup>ark</sup>, we have already remarked. Observe now, moreover, the recompense with which God rewards her pains. " Her young soon grow up, and no longer demand her care." In regard to other animals also, we find notice of this fatherly feeling, with which God spares them and compensates the evils of their condition. The following is an example.

A.

Who sent forth the wild ass free,  
 And broke for him his slavish bonds ?  
 The wilderness have I made an house for him,  
 And the barren desert his dwelling.  
 He scoffs at the uproar of the city ;  
 The cry of the driver, he heedeth it not.  
 He spieth out in the mountains his pasture ;  
 He searcheth after every green thing.

**E.** With how true a feeling of liberty is the nature of this timid animal described. The unfruitful desert is its dwelling place ; and this it barters not for the noise of the city, nor will listen, like its enslaved brother, to the driver's voice. It looks away rather to the green herbage of the mountains, and spies out the smallest blade of grass. It lives in the wilderness unoppressed, free, and joyous.

A.

Will the buffalo be willing to serve thee,

And abide through the night at thy crib ?  
 Wilt thou bind him with his band in the furrow,  
 And will he harrow the valleys after thee ?  
 Wilt thou trust him, because he is strong,  
 And commit unto him thy labour ?  
 Believest thou in him, that he will gather thy harvest,  
 And that thy threshing floor shall be filled ?

E. The wild and tame ox are here contrasted with each other, and the former will not perform the work of the latter. In short, every creature is fashioned for its own ends, and lives and finds enjoyment after its own way. But the three finest descriptions are yet to come, those of the ostrich, the horse and the eagle ; and they close magnificently these pictures of the brute creation.

A.

A wing with joyous cry is uplifted yonder ;  
 Is it the wing and feather of the ostrich ?  
 When she commits her eggs to the earth,  
 And leaves them to be warmed on the sand,  
 She heeds it not, that the foot may crush them,  
 And the wild beast trample upon them.  
 She casts off her young for none of hers ;  
 In vain is her travail, but she regards it not ;  
 For God hath made her forgetful of wisdom,  
 And hath not imparted to her reflection.  
 At once she is up, and urges herself forward.  
 She laughs at the horse and his rider.

Hast thou given the horse his strength,  
 And clothed his neck with its flowing mane ?  
 Dost thou make him leap like the locust ?  
 The pomp of his neighing is terrible ;  
 He paweth the earth and joyeth in his strength,  
 When he goeth against the weapons of war.  
 He scoffeth at fear, and is nothing daunted,  
 And turneth not back from facing the sword.  
 Above him is the rattling of the quiver,  
 The lightning of the spear and the lance.  
 With vehemence and rage he devoureth the ground,  
 And believeth not that the trumpet is sounding.

The trumpet sounds louder ; he cries—aha !

And from far he snuffeth the slaughter,

The war-cry of the captains, and the shout of battle.

Is it by thy understanding that the hawk flieth,

And spreadeth his wings to the south wind ?

Is it at thy word, that the eagle is lifted up,

And buildeth his nest on high ?

He inhabiteth the rock, and all night is there,

High upon the cliff, his rocky fortress.

From this he spieth out his prey,

His eye searcheth it out from afar.

His young ones are greedy of blood,

And where the carcasses are there is he.

E. Mark now the peculiar boldness of these three descriptions. The ostrich, on its first rising to the view, is sketched with an expression of eagerness and exultation. Such is the feeling of surprise and wonder too, that the name is at first forgotten, and it presents itself to the sight, as a winged giant, exulting in the race and shouting for joy. What is stupid forgetfulness in the bird, appears as the wisdom of the Creator, by which he has kindly adapted it to its shy and timid life in the desert. Had it more consideration and tenderness, it would mourn for its abandoned young ; and hence God has denied it understanding, but given it its wild cry of joy, and its winged speed in the race. The description of the horse is perhaps the noblest, which has ever been given of this animal, as the region also, in which the book was written, produces the noblest of horses. It is here, as the Arabians regard it, an intelligent, brave, war-like animal, that partakes in the exultation of victory, and by its loud neighing joins in the battle-cry of heroes. Last comes the eagle with its upward flight and sovereign eye. His royal tower, his sanguinary propensities, and his piratical omnipresence also are truly marked, and he closes the list as king of the feathered tribes, as it was begun with the lion, the sovereign of another kingdom in the brute creation. Behemoth and leviathan, the monsters of the watery world, are still to follow.

A. These I will peruse by myself; and instead of dwelling upon them at present, explain to me rather the general sense, the aim of introducing these pictures, the connecting thread of discourse through the book, and as far as may be, also, the time and place, in which the author lived.

E. So you venture to enquire also, where the author lived. But how can we know this, if we know not the author himself? The enquiry must clearly depend for its result upon another, namely, where is the scene of the book laid,—where did Job dwell? If the historical introduction prefixed to the poetical part of the book is ancient and worthy of credit, (and it is certainly something more than a newly invented story), he dwelt in the land of Uz. But where was this land of Uz?

A. It must have been the delightful valley of Gutah around Damascus.

E. On this supposition, however, the introduction of the book is at variance with the book itself; for here, obviously, we meet with no Syrian, but with Arabian and Egyptian scenes. In all its poetical imagery there is no picture which is distinctively Syrian, though that country is so rich in natural scenery peculiarly its own. We must then give up this place, whose claim is founded upon a resemblance of its name alone, and that probably given at a later period, and look into the Hebrew writings for ourselves. Do you know of no other Uz besides this little colony from Damascus? Read Genesis, xxxvi. 28.

A. So one of the children of Edom had this name also.

E. And where does Jeremiah place the daughter of Edom\*?

A. “Oh daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz.”

E. Nothing can be plainer. And whence came the friends,

\* Lam. iv. 21.

who visited Job, and who lived in his neighbourhood? In the books of Moses even, we find both Eliphaz and Teman among the sons of Esau. In many passages of the prophets\* Teman is referred to as a country or city of Edom, distinguished for prudent counsels and wise sentences, just as we find it represented in the character of Eliphaz. Bildad of Shuah, Zophar of Naamah, and Elihu of Buz are all from places in or near Idumæa. Shuah was a near relative of Dedan,† and Dedan dwelt on the borders of Idumæa. The other cities named were in the same region; and in general, the manners and customs represented in the book are Idumæan, Arabian.

A. Can there have been at that early period such a degree of intellectual cultivation in Idumæa?

E. If not, the poet is at fault in his introduction, in fixing the scene of his poem without regard to the proprieties of time and place; but of this, I am disposed to believe, he knew better than we do. Were it left wholly to us, we should probably deny the representations of the book, and say, that, in times so ancient and regions so uncultivated, such wisdom and such accurate knowledge of nature could never have existed. Yet several of the prophets were clearly of a different opinion.

A. Which of the prophets?

E. Those who in their own time, when Edom had been often subdued and placed under the yoke, still treated it as the classic land of Oriental, that is, Arabick wisdom. The prudent men of Teman, and the wise men of Edom seem to have been proverbially spoken of.‡ Now we know in what this Oriental or Arabick wisdom consisted. It was made up of poetry, proverbs, lofty figurative representations and riddles, as this book represents it. It gives evidence in itself of the region, to which it belongs, for the scene and the whole cos-

\* Jer. xlix. 7. Obad. viii. 9. † Gen. xxv. 2. 3. Jer. xlix. 8. Ezek. xxv. 13. ‡ Jer. xlix. 7. Obad. viii. 9.

tume are entirely Idumaæn. Job is an Eastern Emir, as his friends probably were also, and of the same character with the princes of Edom mentioned in the books of Moses. Jordan occurs in the book, as the name of a river. It no where recognizes the laws of Moses, or contains any allusion to them ; and though it abounds in ideas pertaining to judicial forms and proceedings, they are all adapted to the tribunal of an Oriental Emir. This mode of representation pervades the whole, and is the very soul of the book.

A. But it has also numerous representations of objects pertaining to Egypt—of the Nile, (which here, as in Egypt, is called the sea), of the papyrus reed, of the crocodile and the islands of the dead.

E. Suffer me to proceed, and I will add also—the behemoth, (which was probably the hippopotamus of the Nile, and not the elephant,) the tombs of the kings, not forgetting the elephantiasis :—and why should it not ? Job surely did not live in Egypt, or in other words, the scenery and mode of thinking in the book, are not Egyptian. The mythology which prevails through all the poetical representations is Hebrew, or rather Oriental, (taking this latter word to express the general notion of what belongs to the Hebrew in common with its kindred dialects). The ideas of God, of the world and of its origin, of man, of destiny, of religion, are all Hebrew or Oriental, such as are expressed in no other language but these. If you have not discovered this from our former conversations, you may nevertheless find it on every page of the book itself. Thus the Egyptian imagery is Egyptian still, and wears an aspect of extraneous and far-sought ornament. It is not to be mistaken, that in the whole book, this kind of Asiatic pomp of style prevails, both in the figurative representations and in the facts presented. We shall find in another part of our enquiries all the treasures of Oriental imagery in a poetic strain where we should least expect it,—in a eulogy of wisdom ; and the same is observable in many other de-



scriptions in this book. They are introduced as something strange and beyond the knowledge of the vulgar.' In respect to the ostrich, the behemoth, and the leviathan this is undeniably the case. Had these two last animals been common in the country, where Job lived, they could not have been described as so gigantick, nor with such an air of solemnity. They appear as foreign and strange monsters, as objects of curiosity and wonder ; and this is the purpose for which they are introduced.

A. Is it possible, then, to determine with any degree of precision the sphere in which the author of the book was at home, and what among the objects presented in it was strange, or what was familiar ?

E. With tolerable precision. The mode of life, the possessions, the judicial tribunal, the happiness of the Emir are all his own conceptions, and on these the whole is built. He is acquainted with the offering of sacrifices, but it is the patriarchal offering, conducted by Job himself, the father of the family. Arabian deserts, streams failing from drought, moving hordes and caravans are images of most frequent occurrence in the book. Bands of robbers, dwellers in caves, lions, and wild asses, the avenger of blood, all the formalities of an Asiatic court of justice, and a number of other less important circumstances, which cannot so easily be reckoned up, together point out, in accordance also with the LXX and the historical introduction, Idunæa as the place, in which the scene of the book is laid. On the other hand, the treasures brought from Africa, the rarities of Egypt stand out as ornaments derived from rare and far-sought knowledge. The leviathan and behemoth, at the end of the book, are the pillars of Hercules, the ultima Thule of the author's chart of knowledge.

A. You consider the behemoth, it seems, as the hippopotamus. According to the common opinion the elephant was intended.

**E.** The latest common opinion I have little chance of altering ; but that of earlier times supposed it to be the rhinoceros ; and not only respectable authorities, but obvious traits of the description favour this view. They are however not conclusive. In general, the description is undoubtedly that of an animal whose usual resort is the river, since it is introduced, as something singular, that he eateth grass like the ox, that the mountains bring him forth food, and the beasts of the field play around him. He sleeps among the reeds, and lies concealed among the marshes on the shore of the river, which clearly does not suit a description of the elephant. He goes against the stream, as if he would drink up the river with his enormous mouth, a character not well fitting a land animal. His strength too is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly, where on the contrary the elephant is weakest. His bones are like brazen rods, and his back-bone like a bar of iron. He that made him has furnished him with a sword, for the sharp-pointed and projecting tusks of the hippopotamus may be considered his weapons ; and the language applies better to these, than to the weapons of the elephant. Since, moreover, the name behemoth itself is probably the Egyptian name of this animal, *p-ehe-mouth*, (here modified, as all foreign words were by the Hebrews and Greeks, to suit their own forms), and since, in company with the crocodile, it is placed apart from the land animals, which also are arranged in a separate discourse by themselves, and represented, as all creatures of the watery realm are by the Orientals, as something foreign and monstrous ; it seems to me, that this opinion has at least a balance of probabilities in its favour, and will at length become the prevailing one. Read Bochart, Ludolf, and Reimar, and I believe you will find the description as accurate, as it could well be of a remote and strange animal.

**A.** But the proboscis, which he moveth like a cedar ?

**E.** It is not a proboscis, but the tail, which the language

here indicates ; nor is the length of the cedar the point of the comparison, but its bending over as the cedar bends its branches. This is the sense expressed by the ancient versions, and the image fits the appearance of this round-shaped monster. But enough. Who, think you, was the author of the book ?

A. It is said Moses wrote it, while he was with Jethro.

E. I am sorry that I cannot find reason to adopt this pretty general and quite ancient opinion. I, too, rank Moses very high as a poet, but find no more evidence that he wrote the book of Job, than that Solon wrote the Iliad and the Eumenides of Æschylus. I can boast, I believe, of having studied the poetry of Moses and this also without prejudice. I make allowance too for the difference which a change of circumstances, age, occupation, &c. would produce ; still they appear to me as directly opposed to each other, as the East and the West. The poetical style of Job is throughout concise, full of meaning, forcible, heroick, always, I may say, in the loftiest tone of expression and the boldest imagery. Moses, even in the sublimest passages, has a more flowing and gentle style. The very peculiarities in the style of Moses and in the arrangement of his imagery are foreign to this book. The voice, to which we are here listening, comes forth in rough and interrupted tones from among the rocks, and can never have been trained in the low and level plains of Egypt. The style of thought is that of an Arabian, of an Idumæan, as well in the general scope of his imagery, as in those little favourite traits, which are often even more characteristick than any other. The fancy of the poet acquires its character in youth, and as it then shapes itself it always remains, especially in its great features, which early impressions render indelible. Job abounds so much in images drawn from the paternal and judicial character of an Oriental Emir, which he applies even to God, that we see in what sphere he was educated and his imagination formed. But of this Moses saw nothing in Egypt, nor did any of his fathers

sustain the character of an Eastern prince, such as is here exhibited. To him the whole of this was foreign ; and it would be a fact truly marvellous, if together with the poetry admitted to be his, his laws and institutions, he had produced also this collection of poetry, in the spirit of an entirely different race of people, of a different mode of life, of a world, in short, to which he was a stranger. By going over a few passages I might have saved the necessity of saying so much as I have ; but you can easily make the comparison for yourself.

A. May we not suppose, then, that Moses, while with Jethro; translated the poem from the Arabick ?

E. I might be willing to admit it, if it should seem to have come among the Hebrews by his means. But how are we to prove this ? In my opinion it is not a translation, but was written in Hebrew. I know of no ground there is to suppose it a translation. It approaches the poetical style of the Arabians; as Idumæa borders on Arabia, and their customs and the spirit of their poetry naturally exert a reciprocal influence. I find nothing farther than this to give credit to the hypothesis. Rather the strong features of originality in the book are at variance with it.

A. At least, then, Moses may have found it during his residence with his father-in-law.

E. So, that we may not leave him idle, while tending the flocks of Jethro. Yet I must say, that even this opinion, however gladly I might entertain it, seems to me improbable. Had this book, accredited by their respect for Moses, come at that period into the hands of the Hebrews with its assemblage of incomparable imagery and genuine poetry, we should have found many more traces of its having been imitated by the Hebrew poets, than are now perceivable. How often do the prophets crowd and encroach upon each other ! borrowing their images one from the other, in a confined and narrow circle, and only filling it out and applying it each in his peculiar way.

**This ancient and venerable pyramid stands for the most part unimitated, as it is perhaps inimitable.**

**A. But are there not then imitations in the Psalms ?**

**E. Imitations perhaps of particular passages and of individual images. But do you see no nearer way for the Israelites of the age of David to be acquainted with Edom, than through the intercourse, which they had in the time of Moses ?**

**A. David we know reduced Edom to subjection.**

**E. While Moses came in collision with them by their refusing him a passage. It was besides not accordant with the sentiments of Moses to borrow from the people bordering on Canaan, either books or religious notions, since he aimed as far as possible to make the Israelites in every thing a separate people. In the time of David the matter was otherwise. When he cast his shoe over Edom, as a servant, both its strong cities and whatever treasures of knowledge it might possess, were at his command ; and a king, who valued himself more, and gained greater honour, on account of his poetical productions, than of his throne, would probably take some pains to obtain them. Thus came into his hands this book of ancient wisdom, celebrating in lofty and poetical strains the steadfast piety of one of their ancient Emirs ; and well was it worthy to be read by a prince and patriarch like David. If in his later Psalms, (for in these alone are similar expressions observable), he strove to imitate it, this proves, that he too felt the sublimity of its style, and aimed to join it with his pastoral strains. I do not myself, however, discover so many passages even in the Psalms, which appear to be properly imitations of this, still fewer in the prophets ; and Ezekiel is the first, who mentions Job by name. This occurs in c. xiv, 20 ; and the name is here placed after those of Noah and Daniel. In short, I follow the most ancient notice we have of this book. It is attached to the translation of the LXX and is as follows. " This book is translated from the Syriack, (a manuscript in the Syriack character). Job, whose proper name was Jobab,**

lived in the district of Ausitis on the borders of Idumæa and Arabia. On the father's side he was descended from Esau, and was the fifth from Abraham. The kings of Edom were Balak the son of Beor, Jobab, who was called Job, &c. The friends, who came to him were Eliphaz, an Edomite, prince of Teman ; Baldad, Emir of Shuah ; Zophar king Naamah." This account cannot be supposed entirely factitious, especially nothing in the book contradicts it, though indeed it may easily be said, that it grew out of the resemblance of the names Job and Jobab, and is founded on the family register of the Edomites furnished by Moses. But certainty cannot be attained in matters of so high antiquity, and it is happily unnecessary for the understanding of the book.

A. Do you then consider the historical introduction equally ancient with the poetical parts ?

E. I have sometimes had doubts on this point, but found them of little weight. The first chapters are written with such patriarchal simplicity, such commanding brevity, and unstudied sublimity, that they are fully worthy of the author of the poetry. I may add too, that the scene presented in the first chapter is obviously the groundwork of the whole book.

A. But how is the mention of Satan to be accounted for—a notion of so much later origin.

E. The representation of Satan, as he appears here, I hold to be very ancient. He is simply one of the angels, i. e. one among the attendant train of the Supreme Sovereign. In this character he is sent as a messenger to search through the world and bring information. He merely acts in accordance with the duty of his office, and God himself directs his attention to Job. He goes no farther than he is authorized to do, and this he does only by way of trial. God maintains the right, though for a long time, indeed, he permits Job to be severely tried ; and at the end of the book Satan is no longer heard of. This conception of him, as an angel or messenger commissioned of God, is so widely different from the later Chaldee

conception, that I cannot but wonder how it should have led Heath and others to consider the whole book of Chaldee origin. Such a conclusion falls very wide of the mark. The Chaldee Satan is the opposer of Ormuzd, and the primitive cause of all evil. The agent represented in Job cannot even be compared with the Typhon of the Egyptians, or what the ancients called a man's evil genius. He is nothing but the attendant angel of the tribunal, a messenger sent out to make enquiry, to chastise and to punish. I have already remarked, how much the reference of every thing to a court of justice prevails throughout the book.

A. Yet I confess this view of the subject not a little surprises me.

E. Why should it? Every age and every nation transfers the picture of its own customs both to the upper and nether world. As in the first chapter here it is represented, that God sits in the heavens, as an Emir, and at certain periods gathers around him his servants, the angels, in order to receive information from the earth, and as Satan is sent with a court commission to prove Job, whether he be a true worshipper of God, and faithfully adheres to him, so Job appears through the whole book, as one who is punished without a hearing, as an aggrieved person, who has been unjustly treated. He wishes only, that he may see his judge, and that he would himself take cognizance of the matter. His friends are the advocates of God, who assume to justify the Supreme and All-powerful Judge against him as already condemned, and resort to various subterfuges for that end. At last the sovereign appears in his own person, and in the attributes of majesty calls Job to account. Job is silent, restitution is made, and he is richly compensated for the grievances which he had suffered. This is the plan of the book.

A. It would be very instructive to see it exhibited in detail.

E. I have sketched some farther outlines of it, which you can read. You will find the connecting thread of discourse, and the characters of the speakers pointed out.

A. Is there, then, a methodical connexion among the speakers, an intelligible relation of parts, and a progression in the action represented, discoverable?

E. Certainly there is, only not after our fashion. Job begins with uttering his complaints :\* the three opponents make their several speeches, and Job answers. This process is repeated three times,† except that in the third, the part of Zophar is wanting. Job after defending himself against them keeps the ground alone, and sets forth his cause in representations, which are unquestionably among the finest passages in the book.‡ He pictures his former happy condition, his present wretchedness, and his innocence, in a style at once so beautiful and affecting, that at the close, in the fulness and simplicity of his heart, he utters the wish

Oh that I had one, who had heard me,  
Now that I have made my defence !  
Oh that the Almighty had answered me,  
And one had writ my cause in a book !  
As a mantle I would lay it on my shoulder,  
As a diadem would I bind it to my turban,  
I would number all my steps before him ;  
As a prince would I draw near unto him.

As such too, he stands before us in the book, and listens to the discourse of Elihu,|| till God appears, as the supreme in authority and wisdom, to decide the contest.§

A. Is the book, then, to be considered a kind of drama?

E. Not according to our conception of the drama ; for how would such an one be possible, in exhibiting what is here placed before us ? Here is no action ; all is motionless, and the time is spent in prolonged discourses. The historical statements before and after are obviously but the prologue and epilogue, the entrance and the exit. But I shall not contend

\* Chap. iii.

† Chap. iv—xiv. xv—xxi. xxii—xxvi.

‡ Chap. xxvii—xxxi. || Chap. xxxii—xxxvii. § Chap. xxxviii—xlii.



about a word. The discourses are indeed divided off at intervals ; yet the words scene, act, would seem to me entirely misplaced here. It is in fact simply a consessus of wise men, engaged pro and contra in discussing the justice of the Supreme Governor of the world, a conflict of argument and of wisdom respecting the case of Job. In this alone consists its dramatic character.

A. Do you suppose the book to be founded on historical facts ?

E. That is to me a matter of indifference. Its powerful and profound poetry makes it a history, such as we have few examples of. It becomes, by the depth and truth of its exhibitions, a history of afflicted and suffering innocence all over the world. It does, indeed, render the picture more grateful to think a man like Job actually lived and that he gave proof of a soul so firm, of a spirit so elevated as this book exhibits. In that case the book is for him the perpetual memorial which he wished,—a monument more noble than brass, more durable than marble. It is written with deep impression upon the hearts of men, and its living imagery will be preserved in everlasting remembrance.

A. But the discourses which are contained there, the tribunal and the appearing of God, the representation of Satan, and the substance of the images presented cannot be all history. Who could discourse extempore in such style as this ?

E. In the style of composition it is poetry from beginning to end. Of this there is no doubt, but poetry of a kind, which is of all the most natural. The Orientals are fond of these learned consessions, and of long discourses in a lofty, figurative style, which they hear through, and listen to with patience, and then answer after the same fashion. This *ḥashmal*, is their philosophy, the stately ornament of their rhetorick and poetry. To gratify a taste for this, to indulge the cherished fondness for hearing lofty sentences, and for celebrating the

combats of wit and wisdom, the poet meditated and wrote this conflict of suffering virtue, of human wisdom overcoming and again overcome. How much of it may be history, how much of it may ever have been actually spoken as here recorded, it is of no use for us to know. The poet heard it all and has composed it into a harmonious whole, which is still extant and perhaps the most ancient composition of art in the world.

A. I rejoice at it, for I am deeply interested in the subject of it also, as showing how wise men of the most ancient times discoursed of the providence of God and the destiny of man.

E. In order to the last, however, we must previously treat of the Oriental traditions, which relate to the creation and destination of man, by themselves. We shall there find ourselves in a garden, where the earliest germs of poetry were cultivated, and learn what flowers and fruits have been derived from it to the poetical productions of later times. You well know the estimation, in which the Orientals and all nations, whose minds are equally under the dominion of sense, hold such traditions of the olden time, the sayings, names, and historical notices of their fathers. The most ancient poetry, and the style of thought in this book, receive their form and character wholly from this state of mind.

A. I shall gladly accompany you into this garden of the primitive Hebrew world.

E. Here are the few pages respecting the book of Job, to which I alluded.

## A P P E N D I X .

Brief outline of the book of Job considered as a composition.

The scene presented in the book is two-fold, in heaven, and on earth. The scene of action is above ; that which is below is occupied with discourse only respecting what is

acted in the other, without comprehending its true import. Hence the uncertain and fluctuating speculations—the every day condition of all the philosophies and theodicees in the world.

The object, of which the book treats, is an upright, guiltless man, in a condition of suffering, and even of bodily anguish. We forgive him all his lamentations and sighs, for even a hero is permitted to groan from bodily pain. He sees death near, and longs for it; his life is embittered, why should he not groan?

Job's sufferings are inflicted to promote the honour and glory of God; they are designed to maintain the truth of what God had spoken in praise of his servant. Can human sufferings be represented in a light more honourable to the sufferer? In this general view of the contents of the book, it may be considered a theodicee, or philosophical justification of the Governour of the world in the permission of evil; not a partial justification such as the wise ones of the earth contrived, though these too said much that is ingenious.

But however ingenious the speculations of these worldly philosophers, they yielded no consolation to the afflicted sufferer, but rather embittered his sorrows. Job surpassed them in his representations of the power and wisdom of God, in those views, by which they sought to silence his complaints, but remained miserable still—the customary picture of worldly consolation. Their views are too narrow, and too much obscured. They look in the dust of the earth for that which they should seek above the stars. None of them look so far; no one even conjectures, that the reason of Job's afflictions was what the first chapter represents it.

In the mean time what honour is bestowed upon the sackcloth and ashes of the humble sufferer! He is made a spectacle to angels and to the whole host of heaven. Job maintains his integrity, justifies the word of his maker, and God holds the crown in readiness to adorn his brow. This

two-fold scene, and the invisible spectators of Job's patience in suffering, give a sacredness to the representations of the whole book.

But the man, whom the inhabitants of heaven are constrained to regard as a model of human fortitude and constancy, is upon the earth, involved in a conflict of argument, and here he is human like other men. The poet has given him a character of rashness and warmth of feeling, which at the first address of Eliphaz, though really of a soothing character, hurries him away. This leaven of his natural temper is the condiment of his virtue, and indeed of the dialogue itself, which would be tedious and uninteresting, if it contained only the complaints of the sufferer, and the condolence of his friends.

An accuracy of discrimination, and a nice sense of propriety in adapting the parts, pervade the whole work. The three philosophers exhibit distinctive characters in their discourses, and Job is made to surpass them in their several attempts both as a philosopher and as a poet. Eliphaz is the most sensible and discerning, and so modest, that in the first lesson which he aims to give to Job he does not speak his own thoughts altogether, but communicates an oracle.\* Bildad treats Job more severely, and Zophar for the most part only repeats what Bildad had said. He is also the first to withdraw from the scene.

The round of interlocutory discourse between the parties is thrice repeated.† At the close of the first, they are already so much at variance, that Job formally appeals from them as his accusers to God.‡ In the second, the thread of the argument is most involved, and the plot, if we may so call it, most intricate ; for at the end of this, Job affirms in answer to Zophar, that the wicked even prosper in the world|| though he is only seduced to do so in the heat of discussion. Eliphaz seeks, by an ingenious turn, to produce a better under-

\* Chap. iv. 12.

† Chap. iv—xiv. xv—xxi. xxii—xxvi.

‡ Chap. xiii.

|| Chap. xxi.

standing, but the matter has gone too far. Job declares his sentiments;\* Bildad has little,† and Zophar nothing to say in reply, and Job comes off triumphant. He then proceeds with calm confidence, like a lion among his defeated enemies, retracts what he had uttered from the excitement of the contest,‡ and in three successive paragraphs exhibits specimens of thought and imagery, which are the crown of the whole work.||

However monotonous all these discourses may have sounded to us, they have in fact their lights and shades ; and the course of thought, or rather, the complication of the argument becomes more and more intricate from one discourse to another, till Job returns upon his own steps, and modifies his former expressions. Whoever has not been guided by this thread, and especially, if he has not remarked how Job wrests always from his hand his opponent's own weapon, and either says the same thing better, or assumes the same grounds for his own discourse, has failed of apprehending the animated and progressive character, in short, the very soul of the book.

Job commences with a beautiful elegy,§ and closes for the most part each of his discourses with an affecting lamentation of the like kind. These may be compared to the chorus of the ancient tragedy, and serve to give universality of character and human interest to the argument of the piece.

After Job has silenced the three wise men, a younger prophet ushers himself upon the scene.¶ Like most inspired men of the same sort, he is assuming, bold, and supercilious. He discourses in a lofty style, and accumulates figurative expressions without end, and to no purpose ; and hence no one even returns him an answer. He stands there as an empty shadow, between the discourses of Job and the address of the Supreme Judge, who by his actual appearance only shews his nothingness, and the shadow vanishes. His introduction

\* Chap. xxiv. † Chap. xxvi. ‡ Chap. xxvii. || Chap. xxviii—xxx1.

§ Chap. iii.

¶ Chap. xxxii—xxxvii.

in its relation to the composition of the whole is wisely and instructively arranged.

God himself appears upon the scene unexpected and with overpowering magnificence. He breaks in upon the prophet, who, without being aware of it, had described his coming, and treated it as an impossible event; passes by the wise men, who had assumed to be his advocates, and directs his discourse to Job. With him too, he speaks not at first as a judge, but as a teacher.\* He proposes problems and hard questions to him, who had overcome all opponents and exhausted as it were all the treasures of wisdom. These relate to the mysteries of creation and providence, and confound and put to silence the worldly wisdom even of Job himself.

He places before him seven striking forms of the brute creation, and finally the monsters of the deep,† all which, as the paternal author of the universe, he has created, and for all which, with paternal fondness, he daily provides. “Wherefore are these creatures here? They are not for man’s behoof, most of them are even injurious to man.” With all his worldly wisdom, Job is put to silence and confounded. Submission therefore to the infinite understanding, the incomprehensible plan, but obvious and acknowledged goodness, of the great father of all, who cares for the crocodile and the raven—this is the solution of the problems concerning providence and destiny from the mouth of the Supreme Ruler himself, who utters his voice in the tempest, with the conspiring movement, as it were, of the whole creation. The true theodicee for man is a study of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in all the works of nature, and an humble acknowledgment, that his understanding and his plan surpass the comprehension of ours.

God does not make known even to Job, wherefore he had subjected him to trial. He restored him to happiness, and recompensed him for the injuries, which he had suffered,

\* Chap. xxxviii.

† Chap. xxxix-xli.

and this was all that he could ask. So far, on the other hand, were those who had placed themselves in God's stead from being honoured and rewarded, that they were required to seek atonement by an offering from the hand of Job.

Thus lofty and divine is the plan of the book, of which I have sketched only some feeble outlines. If not the production of a sovereign prince, it is worthy to have been so, for the style of its representations is princely. Through the whole book God acts as the king, as the father, as the superintendant and director of the wide creation. Angels and men, the raven and the behemoth are all equal in his sight. The finest descriptions of the attributes and of the government of God, the most persuasive grounds of consolation, and whatever can be said, on opposite grounds of argument, of providence and human destiny are scattered throughout the book; but the divinest consolation and instruction are found in the general conception and plan of the book itself. In this view it is an epic representation of human nature, and a theodicee or justification of the moral government of God, not in words, but in its exhibition of events, in that working, that is without words. *Ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat intentus operi suo Deus. Ecce par Deo dignum vir fortis cum male fortuna compositus.*

But who shall answer our enquiries respecting him, to whose meditations we are indebted for this ancient book, this justification of the ways of God to man, and sublime exaltation of humanity,—who has exhibited them too, in this silent picture, in the fortunes of an humble sufferer, clothed in sackcloth and sitting in ashes, but fired with the sublime inspirations of his own wisdom? Who shall point us to the grave of him, whose soul kindled with these divine conceptions, to whom was vouchsafed such access to the counsels of God, to angels and the souls of men, who embraced in a single glance the heavens and the earth, and who could send forth his living spirit, his poetic fire, and his human affections

to all that exists, from the land of the shadow of death to the starry firmament, and beyond the stars? No cypress, flourishing in unfading green, marks the place of his rest. With his unuttered name he has consigned to oblivion all that was earthly, and, leaving his book for a memorial below, is engaged in a yet nobler song in that world, where the voice of sorrow and mourning is unheard, and where the morning stars sing together.

Or if he, the patient sufferer, was here the recorder of his own sufferings, and of his own triumph, of his own wisdom first victorious in conflict, and then humbled in the dust, how blest have been his afflictions, how amply rewarded his pains! Here, in this book, full of imperishable thought, he still lives, gives utterance to the sorrows of his heart, and extends his triumph over centuries and continents. Not only, according to his wish, did he die in his nest, but a phoenix has sprung forth from his ashes, and from his odorous nest is diffused an incense, which gives and will forever give reviving energy to the faint and strength to the powerless. He has drawn down the heavens to the earth, encamped their host invisibly around the bed of languishing, and made the afflictions of the sufferer a spectacle to angels; has taught, that God too looks with a watchful eye upon his creatures, and exposes them to the trial of their integrity for the maintenance of his own truth, and the promotion of his own glory. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.\*

\*James, v. 11.



## DIALOGUE VI.

**Of Paradise.** Poetical ideas of it exhibited in pictures of youth, of love, and of the scenery of nature. Whether it ever had a real existence. Why Moses placed it in the remoteness of an enchanted land. From what cause also this region particularly became the scene of so many tales of enchantment. Of the tree of life. Beautiful peculiarity of it in the poetry of the Hebrews. Whether the representations of Paradise tend to hold men too much under the influence of sense. Whether they contribute to cherish the Oriental love of repose. Of Adam's conversing with the brutes. Pictures of the golden age in the peaceful intercourse of all animals with each other. Of love in Paradise. The same ideally represented in all songs of love. Whether Adam received Eve with songs and prophetick anticipations. Delicate expression of the affections of the sexes in these primeval traditions. Of the tree of knowledge. What is meant by the knowledge of good and evil. Why the serpent might eat of the tree, but man not. Character of the serpent as an artful, crafty animal, and a deceiver. Why men wished to be as the Elohim. Distinction between true and false wisdom. Whether the tradition of the tree of knowledge is an *Æsopic* fable. Explanation of it as an ancient tradition. Consequences of eating of the forbidden tree. Change in the condition of man. Analogy of what is here related to our own experience. The original germs of various kinds of Oriental poetry contained in it. Of the Cherubim. Whether they were a mythological representation of the thunder storm in the form of horses. Of the war-chariot, in which God is represented in *Habakkuk*. Of the Cherubim in the tabernacle of Moses, in the temple of Solomon, and in *Ezechiel's* visions. Of *Ezechiel's* Cherub on the mountain of God. Traditions of the most ancient fabled animals of the primitive world, who guarded the treasures of Paradise. Whether the Cherubim of Moses were *Sphinxes*. How from the ark of the covenant these representations were transferred to the clouds, and at last appeared in visions of the prophets. Their origin and composition. Of the Oriental mountains of God. Of the chariot of *Elijah*, and of the chariots of God in the wilderness. Most ancient representations of thunder. Appendix. Biblical poems descriptive of the Cherubim and of thunder.

**EUTHYPHRON.** We are again together, and are favoured with a delightful morning.

**ALCIPHON.** Yes, very opportunely, and with singular appropriateness to the subject of our present conversation. You are to carry me back, you will recollect, to the infancy of our race, and so at the same time to the Paradise of my own early years ; for in fact, the race, as a whole, in my apprehension, no less than the individual, has its distinct and successive periods of developement ; and those of the one are analogous to those of the other. Thus the morning will be to me one of delightful recollections.

**E.** Recollections of your own youth do you mean ?

**A.** It was the delight of my childhood to wander in those scenes of beauty and innocence, which we picture to ourselves in the primeval Paradise, to accompany the patriarchs of our race with affectionate regard, or with tears of regret, in the earliest events of their history. Early impressions from the poets without doubt contributed to this ; and indeed we have very fine poets, who have given us pictures of such objects.

**E.** Every people has them. Among all nations, who are not wholly savage, a feeble echo at least is still heard respecting the blissful golden age of their ancestors. The poets, always the most uncorrupted and susceptible of impressions among a people, the children as it were of the Muses, have seized upon these traditions ; the young have a natural fondness for them, and repeat in their own dreams the pictures of happiness, which they present, while the spring revives the recollection of them in the minds of all, and restores their original freshness as it were from year to year. Thus pastoral songs, poetical delineations of the good old times, and scenes of Paradisiacal peace and happiness have been multiplied, and will always remain the favourite objects of contemplation for the young. What indeed does man aim at with all his ardent wishes and longings, what can he have, but Paradise ? that is, beauty and repose, health and love, simplicity and innocence ?

A. But how ~~had~~ to reflect, however, that most of what is thus represented is but a dream, or soon to become so. The primeval Paradise is lost, the Paradise of spring and of youth passes rapidly away, and we are driven out of it into the open field of labour, amid the summer heats of anxious toil and care. Wherever, too among the nations, a race may be found in the enjoyment of innocence, of peace and of Paradise, there we soon see the serpent intruding, and happiness trifled away through groundless and self-excited passion. Close by the tree of life grows always for man the wished for tree of that proud knowledge and understanding, of which he partakes at the expense of his life. Such is the fate of mortals.

E. You are a very eloquent interpreter, I perceive, of those traditions, of which we are to speak, and must have felt deeply the refined yet natural sense, which they express.

A. Yet there is much of which I have my doubts. Had Paradise ever a real existence, or is the whole a poetical tradition? Moses clearly represents it as a wide extended and to him unknown fairy land. He places it, too, precisely in those remote regions, where fable has placed every thing marvellous, including in its wide compass Colchis and Cashmire with their golden streams, the Phasis and the Oxus, as well as the regions of the Indus and Euphrates. In this broad land, to which he gives the name of Eden, or the land of delight, he represents God as planting a garden. Where, then, in a country so extensive was the garden situated? Where are the marvellous trees, which grew in it—the tree of life and the tree of knowledge? Have these ever come to maturity? Where are they now, and where stood the Cherubim? All this, I confess, has to me, the appearance of fable.

E. So it should have; and the purpose, which we are now seeking to accomplish, is to distinguish between fable and truth, that is, between historical fact and the dress in which it is clothed. You have remarked correctly, that Moses, or the tradition copied by him, gives the situation of Paradise only

within very wide and vague limits, and that the region in which it is placed, is just that fable-land, in which the nations of antiquity placed their finest pictures of all that is visionary and enchanted—the golden fleece, the golden apples, the plant of immortality, &c. It was the garden of their Gods and Genii, of their Peris and Neris, with other creatures of enchantment. But do not all these later marvels show, that there must have been some more simple tradition, and some real fact in primeval history, in which they had their origin? There must have been some cause for the singular fact, that the traditions of the whole world chance to point towards one and the same region. The human race, which, so far as history and the progress of cultivation enables us to judge, has been only gradually spread over the earth, must somewhere have had a beginning; and where more probably—whether we look at history, or the formation of the earth's surface—than in those very regions, to which these traditions direct us? Here we find the most elevated places in the continent of Asia, the back-bone, as it were, of the ancient world. They are the most fertile, too, on which the sun shines. Here nature seems almost spontaneously to yield her agency to man, and anticipate his labour. Moreover the very indefiniteness, which you speak of in Moses' account of the situation of Paradise, is an evidence of its truth. He would give no more than tradition had furnished. He had neither traversed the country, nor could have found there, had such ever been made, the original archives of Paradise; so that what he did was all which he had the means of doing. But it is not our business at present to trace historical truth. We may therefore leave this tradition in its original vagueness, and consider only to what poetical representations it has given rise.

A. It has indeed been a fruitful source, a tree with many branches, and adorned with flowers. For the traditional ideas of Paradise infuse themselves into the boldest anticipations of

the prophets, and the tree of life still blooms in the very last of the books of scripture. It is thus the beginning and the end of Hebrew poetry.

E. And still beautiful at the end, as in the beginning. How has the Paradise of Adam been ennobled by the prophets! They have exalted and transferred it to the times of the Messiah, while the writings of the New Testament have raised it to still higher dignity in the representation of heaven itself. There blooms the tree of life, there we have placed all the scenes of Paradise, and seek beyond the rivers and the ocean the golden regions of antiquity and the islands of the blest. In the whole compass of Oriental poetry, even among the Arabians and Persians, the ideas of Paradise contain the highest ideal of human happiness and bliss. It is the dream of their love, of their youth, of their hopes, both for the present and even the future world—a land,

Where vain illusions shall deceive no more,  
Nor thought revive the anguish of the past;  
Where all, that is, endures, and all is bliss,  
An endless bridal and perpetual dawn.  
A land, whose streams a sweeter fragrance yield,  
And trees cast round a more substantial shade,  
That never wastes nor vanishes away.

A. But may not such pictures have had an undue effect in holding men under the influence of sensuous objects?

E. And what pictures, either of this or of the future world, should the poet make, but such as are representable to sense? Beyond the limits of our own fair world of sense, too, we know no other, whose images might be employed; and men of those primeval times had no more abstract instruments of thought even, than the images of sense. If those, who were already given up to sensual indulgence, have still continued so, if Mohammed, in accordance with his previous propensities has conceived the joys of Paradise with the grossness of sensu-

ality, the fault is in the abuse of sense, not in the thing itself. And yet injustice is sometimes done in this point even to the disciples of Mohammed. Their poets and philosophers have shown as much metaphysical refinement respecting their future Paradise, as any of the Northern nations. In general too, it seems to me, we must make some allowance here for the characteristick spirit of Eastern nations. They feel and enjoy more exquisitely ; why should not also their poetical expressions of love, of delight, of desire, and hope, breathe the same spirit of refined and voluptuous enjoyment ?

A. It seems a thing of course ; and in poetical pictures of innocence, or of the beauties of spring, I gladly admit it, and fear only, that representations of Paradise, in the same spirit, may too much cherish that relaxation and repose of mind, to which the Orientals in general are so much given.

E. Suppose they do. I know not, since we are so well furnished with task-masters in the community, why the national poetry should be a task-master also. To me it is gratifying rather, that in their burning plains, wherever they meet with shady trees, or hear the sound of bubbling fountains and cooling streams, their lively imaginations picture to them the tranquil joys of Paradise, and that, in the poetick fervour of their feelings, they denominate this the land of Eden, that the dwelling place of repose, the strong hold of pleasure, or by other terms of the like kind. Would it have been better, think you, that like the Northern heroes they had transformed their Paradise into a golden banqueting hall, or had conceived Hobbes' representation of wild and universal war, as the original state of nature ? It is the office of poetry, I apprehend, to soften the manners of men, not to make them savage. All representations, which contribute to this end, promote their improvement. Pictures of a Paradise of innocence, of love, and enjoyment in the bosom of nature have undoubtedly done so—

A. Have those two marvellous trees also contributed to the effect ?

E. The tree of life certainly. It is, in the poetry of the Orientals, even in itself considered, a most agreeable and delightful image. Did we but know where it blooms, should we not all go on a pilgrimage to visit it? Now that the fear of God, temperance, and wisdom are represented as a tree of life, which blooms for us all, should we be less excited? Can we be unaffected by it, where represented, as in the last book of the New Testament, as the tree of immortality? There it stands before us, at the end of our course and of the strife of our pilgrimage, in the Paradise of God. It is there to revive and restore the conquering but wearied soldier, to heal all nations with its unfading leaves, and to nourish them with its ever fresh and new returning fruits. When my tongue shall no longer be sensible to the fruits of the earth, let me die in the hope, which this representation inspires.

A. And the tree of knowledge?

E. We will talk of that hereafter. Did it never strike you also, as a fine incident in the account of Paradise, that God brings to Adam the animals of the brute creation to see what he would call them? By this living intercourse and study of nature, man cultivated his faculties of perception, of comparison and abstraction, his reason and language. The first names in his dictionary were the living cries of brute animals, modified by their relation to his organs, and to his feelings. The first perception, which he had of the various dispositions and characters of the soul, was in the brutes; for in their looks, their gait, and whole mode of life, that which peculiarly characterizes each is distinctively, consistently, and unchangingly expressed. The divinity has here exhibited before us, as it were, in a sportive representation, a continual *Æsopick* fable. Nor has any poetical tradition of Paradise forgotten moreover, to represent man here in conversation with the brutes. He is their king, their master, their eldest brother. They live at peace among themselves, and in quiet subjection to him.

A. A fabulous age truly, in a two-fold sense.

**E.** At least a golden age. Listen to a single description of it in the language of Isaiah.

\* The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
 The leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
 The calf, the young lion, and the fatling together,  
 And a little child shall lead them.  
 The cow and the bear shall feed quietly;  
 Their young ones shall lie down together,  
 And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
 The suckling shall play on the hole of the asp,  
 The weaned child on the cockatrice's den;  
 There shall be none to hurt nor destroy  
 In all my holy mountain,  
 For the earth is full of the knowledge of Jehovah,  
 As the waters cover the sea.

Of such pictures as this the prophets are full, and with the most skilful and animating application.

**A.** And the representation of love, as it existed in Paradise—what can you say in praise of that? Milton and others, it is true, have given very fine descriptions of it.

**E.** Many others have done so besides Milton. The love of Paradise is the artless and primeval description of all love. The new and mysterious longing of the man, who finds himself alone, and is unable to express the want which he feels, but which is responded to, as it were, from the heart of his paternal Creator, his sleep, his dream perhaps, the forming of his wife out of his own breast, out of the shield and resting place of his own heart, the farther particulars, that God brought her to him, and blessed them both, that Adam embraced her with the natural expression of admiration and delight, that both were naked, but as yet without the occasion or the feeling of shame—all this is so delicately felt, so briefly, yet so beautifully expressed, that were it even a mere poetical representation, it is yet worthy to be the poetry of Paradise.

\* Isaiah xi. 6.



Love of this description belongs to Paradise. It is the first incipient waking of the heart in the beautiful visions and dreamy anticipations of youth. All the genuine inspirations and poetry of that age, indeed, are drawn from the quiet fountains of this garden of Eden, these feelings so full of simplicity and innocence. The Oriental poets moreover are accustomed to draw their pictures of love and youth in this same spirit. The Song of Solomon, for example, might seem to have been written in Paradise. Adam's simple expressions of admiration and love, "thou art my own, thou art my other self," are heard in its alternating voices from one end of it to the other.

A. You do not suppose, however, that Adam himself uttered the words ascribed to him, with the prophetick expression which they include?

E. Whether he did or not, the feeling, which animates them, was his feeling, otherwise neither tradition nor the writer, who recorded it, would have put the language in his mouth. Let him have uttered it as he would, and as he was able, by tones, or gestures, or perhaps by both together, it is that simplest, fullest, and purest emotion, which, united with innocence and prophetick anticipation, makes up the whole Paradise of the heart. The developement of other propensities, according to this account, was the fruit of the forbidden tree, the step, as it were, by which they went out from Eden, and you know the consequences, which were brought upon the mother of our race.

A. You have made out a rather refined analysis of the history of Paradise. Could it be the aim of these ancient traditions to explain and analyze it for us in this manner?

E. It is at least an incidental purpose of traditions so full of meaning and of sentiment as these, for the narrative is obviously directed to this end. At first "they are naked and are not ashamed," they eat of the tree, and see their nakedness; the Paternal Judge appears and makes known to them

their future lot, plainly the state of marriage and of family cares and anxieties, and the divine being himself provided them with clothing. The Paradise of their emotions is over, the scene is changed, and they are involved in the toils and troubles of life.

A. This view resembles the hypothesis—

E. I beg you will mention no mere hypothesis\* like that to which you seem to allude. Nothing is more foreign to the language and allegorical style of the Orientals, than this, and several others, which are yet more improbable and far-fetched. The Orientals know no allegorical dress of such fashion, as would make the tree of knowledge what this hypothesis assumes. A fiction of this sort is but one of the impure inventions of our own age, unworthy of a narrative so ancient, of such child-like simplicity and such purity, as the history of Paradise. The event alluded to in regard to Adam and his wife is directly spoken of, and on the other hand the feelings, which sprung from partaking of the tree, are given with truth and simplicity. They were new, but disturbing and disagreeable emotions, and they fled to conceal themselves among the trees of the garden. Their father's voice breaks in upon the tumult of their unquiet anticipations, and you know what followed. If all this was what your hypothesis supposes, then we may prove that white is black.

A. I wish you would explain your views more clearly also respecting the tree itself, and the instrument, by which deception was produced. In doing so you are unfolding and explaining to me perhaps the most ancient fables and hieroglyphics in existence, and that too without going aside from our proper purpose.

E. Whether this narrative be a fabulous and hieroglyphick picture, will appear hereafter ; at present let us consider it simply in its proper character, as an artless, child-like tradi-

\* Probably that of Beverland is here meant.

tion. What think you was the tree of knowledge? What is the import of the expression?

A. The knowledge of good and evil means, in the language of the East, so far as I know, prudence, discretion. It is commonly predicated of those years, in which a man comes to understanding, or it denotes one's moral judgment, his capacity for the exercise of this, in short, his practical understanding.

E. And thus, when a man comes to years of understanding, he knows how to distinguish—what, hitherto, he has been learning to distinguish—good and evil. If he remains true to his duty, and resists all temptations to the contrary, he distinguishes good and evil. If by a faulty step he is made to experience the fact, that the punishment of his fault immediately follows his not distinguishing, then he knows what is good and evil, but not in the most agreeable way. Here you see the whole history of this tree, and its true meaning. God forbade man the use of it, and hence he was charged with a specifick duty in relation to it. This was the first easy exercise in the distinguishing of good and evil. All other trees were good, for the use of them was permitted; this was evil, for it was forbidden. The serpent interpreted otherwise, and said “this tree is forbidden to you, because it gives the knowledge of good and evil, that is, a higher knowledge. Eat of it; and from being children you shall become men, from being men you shall become Elohim.” This was a second and different meaning. Finally they ate of it and were indeed enlightened. They saw truly, that they had done wrong; and feelings and views were awakened in them, which they might well have done without. These the Creator made for them the occasion of new trials and duties. He placed them in a different condition, and aided them with the first necessary inventions. This was a third meaning. God might now say, either in derision or in earnest, “Man has become as one of the Elohim, he has learned to distinguish good and

evil." Thus, as we look at the narrative in different points of view, we find one and the same idea, having different aspects, but essentially the same thing. Can any thing be more satisfactory, than a development of this sort, so complete and so simple ?

A. It is very well in a fable, but I know not whether it be equally so in a history, on which so much depends. Millions of men have tasted death in the eating of this apple, and yet it was eaten, it seems, through a misunderstanding.

E. The doctrinal consequences remain as they were, and do not concern us at present. We are treating here of a tradition handed down from ancient times, and from the infancy of our race, which must be considered in the spirit of those times. Let us proceed to examine it more closely in this relation. It contains in fact the fundamental ideas of all moral poetry in the East.

A. If so much depends upon it, I would very gladly do so.

E. In the first place, then, the man had obligations of duty to discharge ; the brute which probably ate of the tree, and by his example (the most powerful language) excited the man to eat, had none. For the brute to eat was no sin, for man it was otherwise. Do you observe the distinction ?

A. It occurs to me also, that the Orientals divide created beings into those, which are free, and those which have obligations of duty. The first includes all brutes, since they have no command given them ; man alone is bound by commands and a law of duty.

E. This distinction throws light upon the whole matter. The serpent acted in simple accordance with its nature, when it ate of the tree ; the man when he would eat of it, and follow the example of the brute, neglecting the dictates of reason, acted in violation of his duty. Do you remember what was said of Adam's intercourse with the brutes ?

A. He learned from them, and made use of their example. On this occasion too he learned a lesson of evil.

E. And what sort of animal did God employ as the accidental cause of the first aberration of his reason, of his faculties of perception and imitation? Could he have used a more fit one? The character of the serpent is that of subtilty and craft. Here he acts and speaks in accordance with it, and is afterwards exhibited in the same character. He is the symbol and receives the reward of a deceiver and seducer.

A. The history I perceive assumes a new character. Would that it were a fable! It would indeed be a beautiful fable.

E. In regard to its outward form and colouring, it should always be considered as such. It was a fable, but one represented in outward act. Without doubt you are acquainted with numerous traits in the fables of Æsop and Lockman, which resemble our account here of the serpent's character, and the curse inflicted upon him.

A. Yes, the fables and traditions of the East are full of them. They ascribe to the serpent manifold art and wisdom, the art, for example, which men have so much sought after, of becoming young again, and restoring their sight in old age,—that also of hiding themselves in danger with great skill, especially the head, in which their power and life are concentrated. It is said too, they possess the secrets of nature, and are actuated by a spirit. I have read many marvellous tales how serpents heal the sick, understand the voice of the charmer, and stop their ears against disagreeable words of enchantment; how they listen to musick, and follow the voice of their priests,—indeed a multitude of traditions, of which one scarcely knows what to think, or how far to credit them.

E. Many of them may only exhibit the natural history of the animal, of which our knowledge is too limited; others are derived from fragments of this primeval tradition, to which more and more of the marvellous and incredible has been continually adhering. These marvels have at length

become the belief of the common people, and contribute very serviceably to the inventions of the poet, and to the self-interested craft and deception of the magician and the priest. But enough for us. Throughout the East, the serpent is celebrated as a knowing, crafty brute ; and we need not prove, that it is a base and noxious one. Observe now with what correctness all these traits are brought out in this narrative. At first, he appears as a knowing, and showy, or glistening animal ; afterwards, as a base deceiver, creeping slyly upon the earth, and aiming his blow at the heel. At first he eats the food of the Gods, knows the secret powers of nature, and has fellowship with the Elohim ; afterwards he creeps upon his belly, and is condemned to eat the dust of the earth. So far is he from being immortal, that man has power to bruise his head, while he can only repay it with a blow upon the heel. At first, a friend of Eve, whom he wishes to make a Goddess ; then, an enemy of her and her children, so that the mother of serpents is treated, as it were, as the proper enemy of her whole race. Can you conceive a more instructive contrast in one animal ? A base worm ! and shall it aspire to teach man who is formed in the image of God ? The folly of man in imitating so degraded a being is placed in the strongest light.

A. Immediately after the fact also, the man sees his serpent-seducer as he is involved in the curse, which is here pronounced upon him. The story is finely turned ; and if the facts related ever happened, the man could not have had a more instructive apologue. The tree, the serpent, the action are the teachers here, and the words only express what alas ! experience too clearly taught. From this view I can perceive the error of those, who have puzzled their brains to determine whether the serpent had feet before this, or a human understanding to perceive the import of the curse, &c.

E. The Rabbins have still more mischievous conceits ; but let us not disturb these people, for we have still many traits of this instructive picture to bring out. The serpent

was, by means of the tree, to open the man's eyes, and to give him the clear-sightedness and wisdom of the Elohim. Why was this? Why betray man with this hope in particular? Do you remember what we have before said of the Elohim?

A. I understand, I believe, to what you refer. By the Elohim you suppose to be meant those beings, who, more knowing than men, with open vision look upon the secrets of nature, and, as it were, behind the curtain, listen to the working of its hidden powers.

E. The existence of such powers of knowledge is a wide spread faith among the Orientals, who strive after this mysterious knowledge of nature, as we once did after the philosopher's stone. It is incredible what stories and fables respecting this hidden wisdom have been handed down from the highest antiquity. Here it grows upon a particular tree, now it is concealed in a figure, a seal, a talisman; then the fowls of heaven prate of it, but for the most part it is spirits, Genii, who feed on the fragrance of the flowers, with this food of the Gods partake also the knowledge of the Gods, and here and there—especially under compulsion—impart their wisdom to individual men. The moral instruction of the Orientals also has taken a very peculiar direction in precepts and poetical fictions associated with these traditions.

A. Even their precepts also?

E. They always warn men to shun forbidden arts, and carefully to distinguish this false and hurtful knowledge from the true, the sole and simple wisdom. I could adduce for you here a multitude of sayings, in which the fear of God, and the fear of demons, obedience to God, and fleeing before the enchantments of false knowledge, are placed in opposition to each other. That is the tree of life, this the forbidden tree of a false and depraving knowledge. But let us return to our history. Is it not such, or do you prefer to consider it a fable?

A. I cannot deny that I do.

E. I would like to see then with how much consequentness you can connect together in it the causes with their effects. For it is the essence of a fable, that it be a consistent whole, and that what is represented in act be represented in a manner picturable to the sense. Take the tree, then, in any one of the senses, which the language admits, and there still remain superfluous and irreconcilable traits. It is a tree, to which, as God declared, either obedience or death was attached ; yet death did not follow, but rather effects of a different kind not included in the threatening. If we attach knowledge to the tree under the same notion of knowledge which the serpent held out, to make the fable consistent, we must admit the language of God to be untrue ; for to some extent at least, the promise of the serpent seems to have come to pass. Their eyes were in fact opened, and they became, as God himself declares, like the Elohim. Why then had he forbidden them the tree ? And why does this newly acquired knowledge, like that of the Elohim, bring after it thorns and thistles, agriculture and the pains of childbirth ? Why too must these new Elohim go out of Paradise ? It would rather seem, that they ought to remain with their brethren the Elohim. Are we to suppose then, that God in reality feared, as they had tasted of the tree of knowledge, they might also eat of the tree of life, and become immortal, as they had become knowing, against his will ? Your fable needs a defender.

A. I leave that for you.

E. That I cannot become, so long as it must be considered a fable. But suppose it to be a tradition, a narrative of an instructive history, the facts of which actually took place with the parents of the human race, and every thing follows naturally. Begin the explanation where we left it, "they were naked and were not ashamed ;" could men continue in this state ?

A. Some enthusiasts say so. They hold that Eve would not have conceived and borne children as women now do ;



that this is the wages of sin, and an equivalent for the punishment of death.

E. So Eve was not formed, as women of the present day are ; for in their formation they ~~are~~ designed to become mothers ; and the first blessing pronounced expressly shows, that men were formed with the intention that they should people the earth. The earth also is fitted to be the habitation of men, and the sweat of the brow belongs to the cultivation of the earth, as necessarily as pain to childbearing. In short, till the authors, to whom you refer, show us another earth, and another humanity, than we are acquainted with, and than that to which the blessing at the creation of our race obviously had reference, we may leave them to dream of Adam's glass body, and a Paradise under the North pole. We have said too much of them already.

A. You suppose then, that God actually created man for the condition, in which we now find him ?

E. And who else should have formed him for it ? The Devil, the enemy of man, surely did not, and God, who formed him out of the dust, necessarily foresaw the development, which took place. He weighed the dust in his hand, and knew what would come out of it ; he measured the powers of his soul, and knew every error of which it was susceptible. In truth, if we deny this, we make ourselves unworthy of our reason, of our humanity, and of our earth. No philosophy is more odious to me, than that which employs every art to put out a man's eyes, in order that he may not know himself. The poetry of the Hebrews, indeed the philosophy of both Testaments, knows nothing of this sublime nonsense. In none of the Psalms, or of the prophets, is this history introduced in such a sense, and that shown from it, which this pseudo-philosophy would have it show. Adam, says the scripture, sinned first, and we all sin as he did ; we must therefore die also, as he died. As Eve was betrayed, so we are betrayed, and estranged from our simplicity—this the scripture affirms, but not that so soon as he sinned he lost his humanity, and suffer-

ed for himself and his posterity ten thousand actus and raptus, new powers introduced, and former ones taken away, in his understanding and will, his senses and all his members. What he did suffer is here plainly described.'

A. What then was it, and how did it follow from the prohibition and the tree in question?

E. Admit the supposition, that it was a noxious but not a deadly tree, of which God had warned them not to eat. We may then conclude, that God denominated the effect of it death, partly as opposed to that of the tree of life, and partly as the severest threatening, by which he could restrain man from the use of it. In the mean time, He who knoweth the bounds of all things, foresaw this aberration from duty, and, since it would have been inconsistent with his wisdom to create a human race to no other end but to perish in the first moment of existence, he placed in the way, and as the occasion of his disobedience, a tree which, in the plan contemplated for humanity, both answered a present purpose, and must serve after a sort to introduce his subsequent condition.

A. I do not understand you.

E. The fruit of the tree inflamed his appetites, gave an impulse to his blood, placed him in a state of fear and inquietness, of terroure and astonishment. This state of his feelings the Creator made use of, and pointed out to his children the consequences of their first transgression, to themselves and their seducer. This latter he made an object of abhorrence to them, and even from their present feelings, before inexperienced, predicted for themselves in future, new scenes of life. The maid of Paradise must hereafter become a mother; she, who had hitherto been the betrothed bride of Adam, was to become Eve, the housewife, the ministering attendant of the living beings, who by her should be born into the light of the world. The quiet dweller in Paradise, who had spent only the first period of his youth in this nursery of his earliest development, had now more toilsome labours before him,

which yet belonged also to his proper destiny ; and finally the painful word death, was announced, and for this fate also he was prepared in the tenderest manner. In short, his first error was made under a paternal guidance, to promote the progress of his being ; the punishment, which God inflicted, was the chastisement of a father, a blessing in disguise. The household door must be opened for man, and his own fault must be the occasion of opening it.

A. What a new aspect does the history in this view of it assume. Now the whole of it interprets itself, and no feature of it is useless ; even in the tone of the punishment inflicted, all is fatherly and forbearing ; it is a progressive history of humanity. The father permits his child to fail in his weakest point, to break for itself the apple of future cares and discords, and to owe it to itself, that it is no longer in Paradise, in which it could not and should not always continue. The man has, by his own arbitrary and self-willed conduct, turned himself out of his father's house ; he must now be his own master, and his own provider.

E. Do you see nothing more in this history, no analogy with our present condition ?

A. A continued analogy. Our life also passes through the same conditions. We too sin like Adam, and like him are punished, that is, brought into a state of greater hardships, but yet a necessary one.

E. Can you draw no conclusion from it with regard to the proper nature of evil ?

A. That it consists primarily in a deviation from truth and simplicity of heart, through alien, indefensible and delusive principles of action. The commandment is always at hand, the law is ever present, either in us or without us, in our consciousness and conscience, or in a positive obligation of outward duty. The serpent, which seduces us, too, is always there, and always tempting—the inclinations of the senses and of our sensual nature, the false representations and illusive

promises of the too confident and proud understanding, or all these together. The consequences of transgression, too, are ever the same ; and I trust in God, that the chastisements also, which he awards to each of his erring creatures, will prove to be paternal favours, dispensations of Providence for our best good, though for the present not joyous but grievous.

E. Here we see human nature, in its general character, and in its various relations, just as the poetry of the Orientals in later times has represented it. At first we have nature, Paradise, love, innocence, a kingdom of beasts, in short every thing with which the fancy of youth so delights to occupy itself ; in the midst stands the tree, by which man's obedience was to be tried, and to which, in the moral poetry of the East, every thing is referred ; and from the eating of its fruit commence those evils, which are lamented in such touching elegies in Job and in the Psalms,—toil, bondage, sickness and death. I might indeed denominate this short chapter an encyclopædia of humanity, and wish in vain, that I were able to set forth, in poetry or prose, its every condition and relation in a manner as free and natural, as that with which it is unfolded in this simple narrative. The fables of Prometheus and Pandora are poor in comparison. But one object in this history yet remains, and a very poetical one.

A. The Cherubim with the flaming sword ? That I suppose means the steeds of the tempest, the horses of the thunderer.\*

E. The horses of the thunderer ? and at so early a period ? How improbable a representation must it have been in a tradition of those primeval times !—a tradition, too, that pictures every thing else so entirely correspondent to those

\* The view of the Cherubim, here referred to and controverted, was maintained about the middle of the last century, by J. D. Michaelis, in a dissertation, *de Cherubis equis tonantibus*, and at the time, when this work was written, was thought more worthy of attention, than it would be now. TR.

times. Did Adam know any thing of these horses? What meaning would they have for him, and how came he by such an image? And moreover what have they to do here? Tempest-steeds with a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life!

A. You do indeed make me somewhat at a loss. Yet such is the image expressed by the Cherubim throughout the poetry of the Hebrews.

E. I know not a single passage, which gives even plausibility to it. In one of the later prophets\* God is represented with horses, but these are by no means the Cherubim. There he is described with a war-chariot, to which indeed horses are properly attached, but in this image he is not represented as thundering. He stands upon his war-chariot, and measures out the land to the Israelites; before him goes the pestilence, and birds of prey are flying to his feet. He beholds and drives asunder the nations, and a panick fear falls upon the tents of the land of Midian. Now he draws his bow and shoots forth his arrows, he smites and dashes in pieces his enemies; in short, he wields the whole armoury of ancient warfare. He returns in majestick array; and his horses go, as they came, before his triumphant car, through the sea, through the heaps of great waters. Is this the same image with the other, and does he here speak of the Cherubim?

A. But the Greeks gave his chariot and horses to Jupiter, the thunderer, and Virgil has beautiful representations of the sort.

E. Is Jupiter Jehovah? Are the Greeks Hebrews? Is Virgil a Hebrew poet? The Peruvians represent thunder as the shattering of a vessel, which the fair Goddess of rain holds in her hand. Her brother comes and dashes it in pieces, then it thunders, and the rain pours down. Such is

\* Hab. iii. 8.

the mythology of the Peruvians, but what would be the effect of attempting by the aid of this to interpret the poetry of the Hebrews? Do we then know nothing of the Cherubim from the language of the Hebrew poets themselves? Are they not distinctly represented to us as works of art?

A. Let us go through an examination of the passages; and first of the form, in which they are represented standing over the ark of the covenant.\*

E. There they have wings and faces, look down upon the covering of the ark, and overshadow the mercy-seat. This is neither the figure nor the position of your thunder-bearing steeds. And probably in the same figure, in which they stood here, they were also wrought in the tapestry or carved on the walls. In Solomon's temple they stood in the same form, only more large and magnificent. The description is wholly a repetition of the same.†

A. But after all there is not much described in it, for how many different forms might agree in having faces and wings?

E. Look then at the temple of Ezechiel.‡ In his description the Cherubim have the heads of a man and of a lion, without any conception of the form of a horse. To the same prophet the Cherubim appeared in the clouds.|| One Cherub stretches forth his hand, and it is a man's hand, which takes the fire from the altar. The countenance appears, and by the comparison and distinction made, its form becomes obvious. Each of the creatures has four faces, those of an ox, of a man, of a lion, and of an eagle, according to the side from which they were seen. These four faces John saw also, only not all on the same animal. Therefore—

A. What then do you infer from the form?

E. Two inferences follow from it beyond dispute. First, that the Cherubim are a compound of several distinct ani-

\* Ex. xxv. 17. 18.—xxxvi. 8. 35. † 1 Ki. vi. 23. 2 Chr. iii. 7.

‡ Ezech. xli. 18.

|| Ezech. i. 10. x. 14.

mals, and second, that among these the figure of the horse is not found at all. —

A. Is there no other passage ?

E. One more, and that a decisive one in regard to the present question. The proud king of Tyre is called by Ezechiel\* a Cherub, who dwells in Eden, in the garden of the Elohim, upon the holy mountain, and walks up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. This is employed as the highest representation of his might, and of his proud magnificence. All the splendour of precious stones is employed for his ornament, and the day of his creation is a day of rejoicing. He appears as a creature exalted and perfect in his ways. Now we know what forms of the brute creation were employed in the primeval world, and especially, by the Orientals of these regions, as symbols of magnificence and pride—precisely those four, which are included in the composition of the Cherubim, the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle. The proverb of the Hebrews respecting them is well known.—“ There are four creatures of stateliness and pride in the world, the lion among the wild beasts, the ox among the tame, the eagle among birds, and man above all.”

A. But it seems to me, that this proverb does not decide with certainty for those earliest times ; for the composition of the Cherubim does not appear to include uniformly the same elements.

E. As all forms of art, especially when used for embellishment, vary in some degree with the times ; yet the spirit of the composition is not to be mistaken. Ezechiel places his king of Tyre, where the most ancient cherubim stood, on the holy mountain of God in Paradise, and gives him a form and character of splendour, of wisdom, and over-awing magnificence. He derived this impression probably from his actual appearance, and very naturally employed, to express it, the image of the Cherubim, which, on account of their fearful

\* Ezech. xxviii. 14. See Appendix II.

and awe-inspiring forms, were placed to keep the way of the tree of life. It seems to me, that this description of Ezechiel, in connexion with the other traditions of the Orientals, gives us so distinct a conception of these shapes of wonder, that we may venture to leave out of view altogether the representation which you suggested.

A. To what other traditions do you allude?

E. Do you know of no other fabled form of the brute creation, that lived upon the mountains of the primeval world, in the very region in which our account places Paradise, and guarded there the treasures of the past?

A. The dragons and griffins of antiquity guarded treasures of gold or golden apples.

E. That was a tradition of a later period, or more Northern tribes. The Orientals have a winged animal that dwells upon the mountain Kaf, and had many a war with the giants of the olden time. It is a creature, they say, of reason and religion, speaks all the languages of the world, has the wisdom of the sphinx, the artifice of the griffin, and guards the way to the treasures of Paradise. It is a prodigy among the works of God, a creature not to be overreached by craft, nor to be overcome by power. The sphinx of the Egyptians, the dragon of the Greeks, and the griffin of the Northern mythology, are all of one and the same composition, modified only by differences of age and country. In tracing the history of these, you will see the later fables, and marvellous tales of the guardians of the tree of immortality at the gates of Paradise, the dazzling forms of terrific grandeur upon the holy mountains, with the flaming sword which turns every way, just as Ezechiel has described the Cherub. Every nation has retained the same in poetry and traditions, added to it from time to time, and modified it by its own fictions. For us it will be sufficient to trace the history of the Cherubim in the poetry of the Hebrews. At first they appear here as a guard with a flaming sword (not as destroyers to lay waste Paradise,



as some have fancied in contradiction to the literal sense). They appear again in the tabernacle made by Moses, who, perhaps because he discovered a resemblance between them and the sphinx, placed them after the Egyptian form upon the ark of the covenant. From the ark of the covenant they were transferred to the clouds ; for since the divine glory descended upon them there, they must be placed as its supporters here also. It thus became a peculiar poetick image of the Hebrews, and at last appeared in the visions of the prophets. The transfer of the Cherub, which was originally a work of art upon the ark of the covenant, to the clouds, as a creature bearing up the throne of Jehovah, was indeed very naturally suggested by the expression, " God enthroned upon the Cherubim," which occurs, as a designation of the Divine Majesty, even in the books of Samuel.\* So soon as it had been applied to the representation of God in the clouds, the imagination of the poet had full scope for employing it in its pictures of celestial objects, and David seems to have been the first, who availed himself of the image.† Yet so far is the Cherub, as employed by David in describing a thunder storm, from suggesting the tempest-steed, that even had some ground existed in other passages, it must have been excluded from this. David's Cherub is a winged animal, upon which God flies, and corresponds in the parallelism with the wings of the wind, while the thunder and lightning are described by their own proper imagery. Even in the age of Isaiah,‡ God who sitteth upon the Cherubim, is no more than the old Mosaick representation, which occurs in the books of Samuel and the Psalms. When God appeared to him, there were no Cherubim in the form of his manifestation.¶ It was not till later times, and out of Judæa, among the captives by the river Chebar, that the old poetick image came to appear in prophet-

\* 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. † Ps. xviii. 11. (Appendix III.)

† Isa. xxxvii. 16.

¶ Isa. vi. 1—8.

ick visions ; and here the Cherubim are seen in their fullest splendour.\* It was however no thunderer's car which they bore, and much less drew after them. They bore up the throne of divine majesty, and above them was as it were sapphire, that is, the clear and luminous heavens. Like the rainbow in the clouds, so was the appearance of the brightness round about, tranquillity, majesty, and grandeur in their most impressive form, but certainly no picture of a thunder storm.

A. The Cherubim, then, according to your theory, had three distinct periods, as works of art in the temple, as represented in the clouds, and as seen in the visions of the prophets.

E. To these you may add also that of their mythological representation in the tradition of Paradise, for this was the original ground of all. Had they not been exhibited in this tradition, Moses would not have placed them upon the ark of the covenant, and so they would not have been transferred to the clouds, nor finally have appeared in prophetick vision. You will readily see moreover how, in the course of these changes in the mode of its use, the image itself must also experience a change. In the most ancient tradition it was a creature inspiring wonder and awe, in the tabernacle a lifeless work of art, in the Psalms a poetick image, and finally in the prophetick visions a ζῶον, a celestial creature, the bearer up of the divine majesty. The difference of use, and the distinct sphere of each, Ezechiel himself gives. In the heavens he describes their forms, as living and majestick, with their four marvellous faces ; in his temple he leaves them only two of these, either because he would not represent a human countenance in the temple, in order to avoid idolatry, or because he doubted respecting the skill of the artificers. In the tabernacle of Moses both circumstances were combined, and the form in which the Cherubim were there represented, was undoubtedly very simple.

\* Ezech, i and x.

A. The conception of the Cherubim, then, as we learn from these views, was, in its leading character, that of a creature of marvellous and supernatural form, a compound of several distinct animals.

E. That is undeniable. It appears also, from the description of their form, which Josephus gives as traditional, that the Cherubim were winged animals ( $\zeta\omega\alpha$ ) of a form, to which nothing seen by human eyes had any resemblance, a fabulous compound of the majestick, the terrible, the powerful and the marvellous. Undoubtedly within its own limits, embracing as it did, in its elements, the four proudest forms of earth and air, the eagle, the ox, the lion, and man, it varied, according as the poet introduced it in his imagery, or art could mould it into its own shapes. The Arabick traditions also mention respecting the Cherubim of the ark, that they were a winged being in human form, with a look, which was dazzling like a flame of fire, and in time of war sent a tempestuous wind upon the enemy—a fable, the ground of which we may find in Biblical history.

A. But how do you account for the origin of the first and most ancient mythology of the Cherubim at the gates of Paradise?

E. Of this also the same universal tradition gives a very probable explanation. That these Cherubim were stationed to keep the way to the tree of life, to the garden of the Hesperides, is the unanimous report. That the Cherub of the Orientals had his station upon a mountain, and walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire, is the testimony of Ezechiel, and is confirmed by traditions, which prevail throughout the East. They all assign him his place upon a mountain of farther Asia, behind which lies Paradise, probably in the same region in which Moses has placed his also. Do you know of no other mythology which speaks of a mountain of God?

A. I know of none.

E. It is known and familiar to all the Eastern nations

from Thibet to the Red Sea, a mountain on which dwell the Gods, the Lahi, the Elohim, the Demons and happy men, and which some few traditions, that have found their way into Hebrew poetry, place toward the North. Who was the king, that in the ironical representation of Isaiah says,

I will ascend up into heaven,  
Above the stars of God will I exalt my throne ;  
I will sit upon the mount of the congregation,  
Upon the heights of the North ?

This mythology could not have originated with the Hebrews, since they have Sinai and Zion, for their holy mountains ; and you know, with how much zeal Isaiah exalts his holy mount Zion above all the mountains of the earth. But in the discourse of Elihu\* God comes also from the North in golden splendour. He breaks forth from his holy congregation, or assemblage of Gods, as he did to the Israelites from Mount Sinai. Perhaps this mountain of the North was the same mount of the Cherubim, on which the King of Tyre in Ezechiel walked up and down before the garden of God, and in the midst of the stones of fire.

A. And how did the notion of Cherubim upon this dazzling mountain originate ?

E. It was at first undoubtedly, as simple as the tradition of Paradise itself. Men were banished from it, and a lofty mountain-range lay probably between them and the happy residence of their childhood. This too, abounded perhaps in wild animals, of which the adventurous wanderers, who would have searched out the way thither, brought back marvellous and frightful tales. Above, upon the mountain, hung the thunder-clouds, or it may be the mountain sent forth volcanick flame. These, mingling in the tale of the wanderer, would naturally enough be combined, and thus form the fabulous

\* This will be understood by referring to the author's interpretation of Job, Chap. xxxvii. 22, as given in the fourth dialogue p. 87. Tr.

animal, with a flaming sword, which turned every way, a compound of many phantoms. Or it may be, that, when the first men were compelled to go out from Paradise, and cast a look behind them, they beheld flames shooting here and there, with other dazzling meteorick sights, and wild forms of the brute creation, and thus received an impression, which they transmitted, and which afterwards, from seeing the mountain and from the tales of travellers, of adventurers, and poets, shaped itself to a creature of strange and marvellous form. But be that as it may, there is at least no ground for the fiction, that the Cherubim carried man from Paradise, as poets and painters have sung and pictured it. God himself removed them out of the garden, and the Cherubim came as its guardians.

A. But was not Elijah taken up to heaven by a chariot and horses of fire ?

E. That too was a war-chariot, a triumphal car, not a mythological thunder-car, much less a Cherub. So Elisha understood it, who witnessed the phenomenon. The import of his exclamation was, "Thou hast been the champion of Israel, his chariot and horse ; therefore also heroick and war-like is thy ascent, and as a conqueror dost thou appear in the heavens." So when the chariots of God are said to be thousands of thousands, the image is taken from war and triumphal chariots, as the whole Psalm shows. God came forth from Sinai to go before Israel, and to conquer the land ; the mountains tremble, kings flee before him. He divides the spoil, and soars aloft with his chariots ; he carries his captives away in triumph, and distributes his gifts. It is the same representation, which we saw in the imagery of Habakkuk, and which, in describing the conquest of the land of Israel, is set forth in the finest songs of triumph.

A. But what other image do you give me, as a representation of the thunder ?

E. The voice of a reproving father. This image still presents itself to the minds of all children, and is found in

the simple history itself, in which the thunder-horses have been sought. "They heard the voice of Jehovah walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Nothing is more probable, than that this voice was the sound of thunder, and that by this expression the image was introduced and continued in the poetry of the Hebrews. And if so would it not be unreasonable to suppose that an image, so accordant in its primeval simplicity and artlessness with the child-like and artless character of the narrative, and one so complex, bearing the artificial character of a later age, were used with reference to one and the same thing? I have now exhibited to you, I believe, the history of the Cherubim, in its origin and progress, and with adequate proof; and that is all that can be expected with regard to a mythological conception in poetry so ancient. Read and compare, and you will no longer have any doubts on the subject.\* We see in them mysterious and incomprehensible creatures, of superhuman wisdom and majestick form, bearing up the canopy, on which rested the throne of the Most High; and by whom could this be more appropriately sustained, than by the symbols of all that is sublime and awe-inspiring on the earth, combined with an idea of the inconceivable and unapproachable, of profound knowledge, and unuttered wisdom.

## A P P E N D I X I.

### Ezekiel's Vision of God enthroned above the Cherubim.

I looked, and lo! a whirlwind from the North†  
 Came sweeping onward, a vast cloud, that rolled  
 Its volumes, charged with gleaming fire, along,  
 And cast its dazzling splendours all around.  
 Now from within shone forth, what seemed the glow

\* See Appendix I.

† Here too, as in Job. xxxvii, 22, the vision of God comes from the North, and probably also from the mountains of the Gods. Isa. xiv. 14. Ezech. xxviii. 14. Again in the vision of Zechariah vi. 1—8 the horses, which have gone to and fro through the earth, go towards the North as their place of rest.

Of gold and silver,\* molten in the flame,  
 And in the midst thereof the form expressed,  
 As of a four-fold living thing—a shape,†  
 That yet contained the semblance of a man.  
 With four-fold visage each, and each four wings,  
 On upright limbs and cloven feet they stood,‡  
 And shone with splendour as of burnished brass.  
 Withdrawn beneath their wings, on every side  
 Were human hands, for each four-sided seemed,  
 And four-fold had their faces and their wings.  
 Then, wing to wing, and each to each close joined,  
 They turned not in their going, but went forth,  
 Advancing each with look and course unchanged.¶

\* Properly an amber-coloured metal, compounded of the two, of peculiar brilliancy, and highly valued in ancient times, but for which we have no name. Tr.

† In this view I have adhered strictly to the sense of Herder, who understands the whole as one living creature. See Ezech. x. 15. 20. and Gesenius' Lexicon. Tr.

‡ In the form of the Cherubim, particularly in its having the cloven feet of the ox, we cannot but recognize a resemblance to the sphinx, though this latter was modified in accordance with the forms of Egyptian mythology and art.

¶ An image of the omnipresence of the throne of God, and of the unreturning progress of his working throughout the natural world. [It could not of course be understood from this, that each face, or even each of the four-fold forms of the living creature, went forward by itself, in such a way as to separate the one from the other; nor that there was no change of direction in the motion of the whole. The whole obviously moved as one, and below they are described as going and *returning*. The meaning then must be, that each several face looked constantly in the same direction, and when it advanced moved in a direct line without turning. In the lines following that, to which this note is attached, I have exhibited the direction of the different faces more distinctively perhaps, than the author intended to do. My conception of the matter is, that, as the whole approached him from the North, the human face, in each of the four-fold forms, was directed towards the prophet, those of the lion and ox, to the right and left, and the eagle's backward, or towards the North. Thus the four human faces looked to the South, those of the lion to the East, and so of the others, being directed to the four

In all the four-fold visaged four was seen  
 The face of man ; the right a lion, and an ox\*  
 The left distinguished, and to all the four  
 Belonged an eagle's visage. By itself  
 Distinct, their faces and their wings they each  
 Extended upward, joining thus, it seemed,  
 Two wings for flight, while two their bodies veiled.†  
 With course direct, and forward each advanced,  
 Whither the spirit moved they went, nor ever turned.

The several living forms, like glowing coals  
 Appeared. What seemed the flame of torches played  
 Between them, and the dazzling light of fire.  
 From out the fire went gleaming lightnings forth ;  
 And quick, as lightnings flash, the living forms  
 Were here and there, went forth and back returned.‡

cardinal points, and those of the same kind always to the same point, whether in motion or at rest. When therefore the whole moved in the direction of the human face, it went South without turning or changing its direction ; but when the whole went North, or in the direction of the eagle's face, the human must necessarily move backwards, and so of the others, but each always looked in the same direction, or to the same cardinal point, and went forward in no other. This view seems to me to agree with the original of the tenth verse, and with the whole description in this chapter ; and though in Ezech. x. 14. the face of a Cherub (see the following note) is named as the first, it seems probable at least from the context, that the whole was seen in a different direction, or towards the East. Tr.]

\* What the prophet here calls the face of an ox, in Chap. x. 14. he calls the face of a Cherub ; and it was perhaps commonly considered as peculiarly such, from the fact, that the form of the ox was the predominant one in the whole composition, as the aspect of the sphinx shows.

† This veiling of their bodies, as appears from the vision of Isaiah, Chap. vi. 2. was a symbol of their unworthiness to serve the Lord of Creation.

‡ I have omitted here the description of the wheels beneath the throne, as indeed they are not found in the description of John, Rev. iv. They serve however to show, that the Cherubim did not draw the throne of the Divine Majesty, as horses harnessed before it, but bore it up as



Above their heads, high over-arching, seemed  
 An azure firmament outspread, like clear  
 Transparent crystal, that inspired with awe.  
 Approaching near the firmament, their wings,  
 Extending wing to wing, were upward spread.  
 With two they bore themselves aloft, with two  
 They veiled their bodies round, And as they went,  
 I heard the rushing sound of wings, like rush  
 Of mighty waters, or the distant sound  
 Of thunder, the dread voice of Shaddai.\*  
 They went with sound of tumult, like an host,  
 And when they stopped, they closed again their wings,  
 For when, from the o'er-arching firmament,  
 Above a voice was uttered forth, they stood  
 With wings depending, and close veiled around.  
 And high upraised above the firmament  
 There seemed the sapphire splendour of a throne,  
 And on the throne there sat, what seemed the form  
 Of man. It shone with amber glow of gold  
 And silver intermixed, as burning fire.  
 Both inward and without, and from the loins  
 Above and underneath it seemed like fire,  
 And shone with radiant lustre all around.  
 As shines the rainbow in the day of rain,  
 So seemed the lustre of that radiant form.

winged creatures. The Cherubim and the living wheels entirely correspond to each other, as well in regard to number, as to the rapidity and direction with which they moved.

\* Obviously the thunder is distinguished from the sound and still more from the essential being of the Cherubim. It is here introduced simply as an image by way of comparison, just as rushing waters and the moving of an army are introduced. It is here called the voice of Shaddai, as it generally is in Hebrew poetry. Even when the Cherubim stand still, and let fall their wings, it thunders in the firmament above them. In the vision of John also, Rev. iv. 5. the thunder proceeds from the throne, and they contribute nothing to it. They are the bearers up of the Majesty of God, the image of all that is majestick in his creation, serving and unceasingly praising him; the symbols of hidden wisdom. When the seals of the book are opened, (Rev. vi.) these living creatures call to the apostle, in vision, to come and see what was contained in the book.

**The aspect of Jehovah's Majesty  
I saw in this, and fell upon my face  
And heard the voice of one that spake.**

## APPENDIX II.

**Lamentation over the downfall of the King of Tyre under the image of a Cherub.\***

**Oh thou, the crown of art, with wisdom filled,†  
And perfect in thy form, in Eden thou  
Hast been, the garden of the Elohim.  
With every precious stone wast thou adorned,  
With ruby, emerald, and the diamond's fire,  
With hyacinth and jasper, onyx stone,  
And sapphire, and with gold. They welcomed thee,  
The day of thy creation, with the voice  
Of joy and praise, with drum and trumpet's sound.‡  
I placed thee for the Cherub, that outstretched  
Its wings, and guarded Eden; thou didst stand  
Upon the holy mountain of the Gods,  
The Elohim, and up and down didst walk  
Amidst the stones of fire.¶ In all thy ways**

\* Ezech. xxviii. 12. This passage is an imitation of the lamentation of Isaiah over the King of Babylon, Isa. xiv. 2. a translation of which will be found in one of the subsequent dialogues. It is placed here on account of the description of the Cherub, which Ezechiel, according to his custom in using figurative language, has carried out in detail.

† Tyre was the richest commercial city of its day, and as the terms, Phœnician or Sidonian work, was in ancient times the common name of works of art, so the object here represented could not be more affectingly bewailed, than under the form of a rich and finished work of art.

‡ Perhaps this applies, as matter of fact, to the beautiful situation of Tyre, which seemed purposely designed for trade and magnificence. As a figurative representation, it is a well-known custom of the East to accompany birth-day and other celebrations of that sort, with musick and sound of kettle-drums.

¶ I know not whether these stones of fire, or glowing stones, are to be considered precious stones, or whether they are something accompanying the flame of the sword, that turned every way. I could wish, that the mythology of this mountain of the Gods were explained by more numerous traditions, and hope it may be so hereafter.

Hast thou been unpolluted, from the day  
 Of thy creation, till transgression now  
 Is found in thee. By all thy merchandise  
 Hast thou been filled with violence and fraud,  
 And therefore will I thrust thee, as profane,  
 From out the mountain of the Elohim.  
 Thee, the protecting Cherub, I destroy,  
 And cast thee from amidst the stones of fire.  
 Thine heart was lifted up with ornaments  
 Of beauty, by the brightness of thy form  
 Wast thou despoiled of wisdom ; therefore now  
 Will I reject and throw thee to the ground,  
 And make of thee a gazing-stock for kings.\*  
 By all thy many crimes, and by the fraud  
 Of traffick in thy merchandise, hast thou  
 With shame defiled the glory of thy name ;  
 And from thy bosom shall go forth a fire, †  
 That shall devour thee. Thou shalt be but dust  
 And ashes, in the sight of all, that look  
 Upon thee. They among the nations round,  
 That know thy greatness, with astonishment  
 Shall see thy downfall. Thou hast been the pride  
 Of earth, but henceforth shalt thou be no more.

### APPENDIX III.

#### Description of the thunder. ‡

\* In imitation of Isaiah, xiv. 16.

† Perhaps this trait also in the picture of the Cherub has reference to the devouring flame, that turned every way. It is the way of Ezechiel to fill up his pictures even to the minutest point. The fire of the Cherub, if such be the meaning, is here turned against himself.

‡ Ps. xviii. This is introduced here to illustrate the mythology of the thunder and of the Cherubim. The whole movement of the Psalm is beautiful. David, in imminent danger of death, calls upon God, and his cry is heard without delay. God delivers him by means of a thunder-storm, perhaps in the midst of battle, from death and from his enemies. That death is represented here, as a hunter with nets and cords, is well known. The other images, of the rivers of Belial, and the kingdom of the dead, will be explained in the following dialogue.

The floods of death encompassed me.  
 The rivers of Belial filled me with dread.  
 Around me were the cords of the grave,\*  
 The snares of death were before me.

In my distress I said I will call on the Lord,  
 And unto my God will I cry aloud.  
 He will hear me from his palace,  
 My strong cry shall reach his ear.

Then the earth shook and trembled,  
 The foundations of the mountains moved,  
 And were shaken, because he was wroth.  
 There went up smoke out of his nostrils;†

\* The expression "cords of the grave" is sufficiently harsh, but could not well be softened without losing the personification, which Herder intended to exhibit. (See the previous note.) Fidelity seemed to require, that I should exhibit this, though I like better in regard to the sense of the original, the opinion of De Wette, that no personification was intended. Tr.

† A tempest, perhaps accompanied by an earthquake, is here pictured forth with all its striking phenomena. The earth shakes. The smoke goes forth from his nostrils, that is (v. 16.) the violent wind loaded with vapour, which precedes the tempest; now the lightnings commence; the heavens become darker and more depressed, and seem to sink towards the earth; the storm sweeps along with increasing fury; the darkness becomes intense, interrupted only by the lightning's flash. At length the loud thunders are heard, the lightnings are redoubled, and shoot forth in all directions, speeding themselves onward. All this, in its several successive traits, is clothed in continuous mythological imagery. The ruler of the tempest casts forth in his wrath, smoke from his nostrils, and then fire from his mouth, by which the icy arch of heaven is made to glow like burning coals. Now he inclines the canopy of the heavens, as it were, towards the earth, wraps himself in the darkness of night, and shoots forth his arrows, hurls abroad his lightnings, and wings them with speed. In this rich imagery, by which the thunder is represented, the Cherub is no more than a correspondent to the wings of the storm, as the parallelism shows. He is merely the vehicle, on which God moves, just as he is often said to move on the wings of the wind. In this Psalm, then, the leading image, by which the thunder is represented, is that of the voice of an angry and reproofing God—a figure, that in the 29th Psalm alone occurs seven times.

Fire from his mouth devoured around,  
Coals were kindled before it.

He bowed the heavens and came down,  
Darkness was under his feet,  
He rode upon a Cherub and did fly,  
He flew on the wings of the storm.

Now he wrapped himself in darkness,  
Clouds on clouds enclosed him round.  
At the brightness before him the clouds vanished,  
Hail-stones fell, and coals of fire.

The Lord thundered in the heavens,  
The Highest uttered forth his voice,  
There were hail-stones and coals of fire.  
Then he shot forth his arrows around,  
Redoubled his lightnings, and sped them forward,  
The depths of the sea were laid open,  
The foundations of the earth revealed,  
At the reproving voice of the Lord,  
At the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

He reached down from on high,  
And took hold upon me ;  
From deep waters he drew me forth,  
And freed me from my strong enemies,  
From foes, that were too powerful for me.

#### A P P E N D I X I V .

The voice of Jehovah.\*

Give to Jehovah, ye worshippers of idols,  
Give to Jehovah honour and power.  
Give to Jehovah the glory of his name,  
Worship Jehovah, arrayed in his Majesty.

The voice of Jehovah is above the waters,†

\* Ps. xxix.

† The parallelism shows that these waters are not the Mediterranean Sea but the waters of heaven—the dense rain-clouds. In the sequel it

**The God of glory thunders on high.  
 Jehovah thunders upon the great waters,  
 The voice of Jehovah sounds with might,  
 The voice of Jehovah sounds with majesty.**

**The voice of Jehovah shivers the cedars,  
 Jehovah shivers the cedars of Lebanon.  
 He makes them to skip like a calf,  
 Lebanon and Sirion like a young ox of the desert.\***

**The voice of Jehovah scattereth the flames,  
 The voice of Jehovah shaketh the desert,  
 Jehovah shaketh the desert of Kadesh.  
 The voice of Jehovah maketh the hinds bring forth,  
 And layeth the forest bare of its leaves.**

**Jehovah sitteth and poureth out the floods,  
 Jehovah is enthroned as a king forever.**

**will be shown why Jehovah is specially represented as the God of thunder. That this Psalm is a continuous description of a tempest is too clear to be disputed.**

**\* A wild animal of the ox kind resembling the buffalo. Tr.**

## DIALOGUE VII.

Tradition of the origin of man. Name taken from the notions of his tendency to dissolution, his feebleness, and relation to the earth. Elegy of Job on the destiny of man. Of the breath of God, as the sensuous image of power, in thought, word, and deed. Hymn on the strength and Godlike character of human nature. Sublime foretelling of the same in the creation. From what conception can Epic poetry impart to human nature, in its physical and spiritual relations, ideal elevation and dignity? How far has the poetry of the Bible developed this? Whether this conception be so pure and divine? Why the moral sentiments of the earliest times and the poetical expression of them must have immediate reference to God. The useful effect, which this produced. Whence the conception of a kingdom of the dead originated. Elegy concerning it. Whether it is at variance with the immortality of the soul, or rather presupposes it. Poetical view of places of burial, and of the life of those entombed in them. Poetical description of the kingdom of the shades among the Hebrews, Celts, and other nations. Whence probably originated the notion of giants in the Oriental kingdom of the dead? Why whole kingdoms and cities sleep in it. Of Beelzebub the king of the shades, and of Scheol, his palace or kingdom. What images has this representation furnished for the New Testament? The influence of this conception on the minds of men. Language of God on the subject of immortality in nature—in revelation. Translation of Enoch. Whether it is a fragment of poetry—a reflection awakened by his premature death. Reception of the patriarchs into the unseen world, as the true friends of God. Impression produced by the conception of the congregation, the kingdom of the fathers. Two Psalms with their explanation. That the 16th Psalm was by David, and contains the notion of an eternal dwelling in the presence of God. Whether the Israelites borrowed or derived from the Egyptians the representation of the Islands of the blessed. Origin of the notion of a resurrection of the dead. Appendix containing a description of the kingdom of the dead, as represented by Job, an Arabick Song of consolation respecting the condition of one deceased, and a designation of the probable course, in which the Hebrew notions of the state of the dead were unfolded.

A considerable time intervened, before these conversations were resumed. Alciphron had lost his best friend by death,

and his mind was oppressed with gloomy feelings. At length during an evening walk, while the setting sun was beautifully exhibiting the daily repeated image of our own departure, he began again, after some other conversation, with a subdued and melancholy tone as follows.

ALCIPHON. You have forgotten, Euthyphron, the beautiful tradition of the origin of man, with which is so nearly associated his whole earthly destiny—earth to earth. From this Adam came forth, and to this he returned, into the bosom of the mother that bore him. Earth to earth ! is re-echoed from the whole life of man. I seem, even now, to hear it reflected in the hollow sound of the last sod of earth thrown upon the grave of my friend, and I have recently found a melancholy pleasure in reading many of these Oriental poems, for which formerly I had no relish. All the terms, by which man is here designated, are indicative of nothingness and decay. He is a clayey tabernacle, which moths and worms are incessantly destroying ; a flower, which the wind passeth over and it is gone, or which the sun shines upon and it is withered. Perhaps no poetry has represented the images of this perishable and shadowy character of man in so touching a manner, and at the same time they all flow naturally out of the radical forms of the language, as if they were the original conceptions of the character and destiny of the race.

Is it a pleasure for thee to oppress,  
Thus to disparage the work of thy hands ?  
Consider yet, I beseech thee,  
That thou hast formed me as clay,  
That I must soon return to the dust.

Permit me, in this tranquil evening twilight, when the sun, the task-master of our earthly labour, is sinking beneath the horizon, and all creatures seem to be enjoying their release from an oppressive, but vain and unsatisfying toil after the perishable objects of sense, permit me to read to you an ele-



gy, which I have never myself so deeply felt as now. . Job was a great and philosophick poet. . He understood what the life of man is, and what it is not, and what we have to hope for in the end.

Hath not man the task of a servant on earth ?  
 Are not his days the days of an hireling ?  
 As the servant longeth for the shade,  
 And the hireling looketh for his reward,  
 So to me have evil months fallen,  
 And wearisome nights been counted out to me.  
 When I lay myself down, I say  
 When shall I rise again ?  
 The night is irksome to me,  
 I am wearied with restless dreams,  
 Till the dawning of the morning.  
 My flesh is clothed with worms and decay,  
 My skin becometh closed and healed up,  
 But breaketh forth again in new sores.  
 My days have flown, and are passed away  
 Swifter than a weaver's shuttle,  
 They failed when hope was gone.

Oh ! remember, that my life is a breath,  
 Mine eyes shall never turn back  
 To see good upon the earth.  
 The eye, that seeketh, shall not find me,  
 Thine eye will seek me, but I am no more.

As a cloud wasteth and vanisheth away,  
 So man goeth down to the grave,  
 And cometh up again no more.  
 He returneth not into his house,  
 And the place of his dwelling  
 Shall know him no more forever.  
 Therefore will I not refrain my mouth,  
 I will speak in the anguish of my spirit,  
 I will cry out in the bitterness of my soul.  
 Am I the river and its crocodile,  
 That thou settest a watch over me ?  
 If I say my bed shall comfort me,

**My couch shall relieve my sorrow,  
Then thou scarest me with dreams,  
And terrifiest me with visions,  
So that my soul chooseth death,  
Death, rather than this frail body.**

**I am weary of life, I would not live always.  
Let me alone, for my days are vanity.  
What is man, that he is so great to thee,  
And thou settest thine heart towards him ?  
That thou visitest him every morning,  
And provest him every moment ?  
How long wilt thou not look away from me,  
Nor let me rest, till I draw my breath ?  
Have I sinned ; what did I against thee ?  
Oh thou, that lookest upon men,  
That thou settest me as a mark for thee,  
And makest me a burthen to myself.  
Why wilt thou not forget my transgression,  
And suffer my guilt to go into oblivion ?  
For in a moment I lie down in the dust,  
In the morning thou seekest me, and I am not.**

Such is the fate of man—earth to earth ! the first and only oracle of God respecting our destiny. What will a tabernacle of clay, in which a fleeting breath sports itself, in its pride ask more ?

**EUTHYPHRON.** But you forget, my friend, that this tabernacle of clay is ensouled by the breath of Jehovah. In the inspiration of God is imbreathed the spirit of immortality, and of all living energies. Have you never remarked the representations of similar origin, which ascribe to the breath of God all the powers and miracles of thought, and of a will of Godlike energy, nay, as the word of truth itself declares, the imparting of a divine spirit and of a Godlike faith ? Your grief has led you to contemplate one aspect only of human destiny ; the other is presented in the poetry of the Hebrews with no less force and clearness.

**A.** With force, do you say ? What is a breath ? You

would not look here for the metaphysical soul of our philosophers ?

E. Most certainly not, nor an analysis of its faculties according to our methods. But the essential, the eternal in its substance, that it came from God and returns to him, that in its perishable tabernacle it puts forth divine energies, and proceeds in a special manner from the word, from the breath of the mouth of God, this is clearly and fully expressed in this language and poetry.

A. Hardly so ! for how late was all this thought of. In a book\* belonging to the period of the captivity we are first told, that the breath returns to God, who gave it ; and there it is plainly a sentiment of Chaldee philosophy super-added to the simple traditions of antiquity. In the account of Adam, in Job, in the Psalms, there is nothing of it.

E. Will you not examine more carefully these conceptions of the immortality of man, of his weakness and his strength, especially in regard to the peculiar notion, that his soul is the breath of God. I think you must have overlooked many things, or suffered yourself to be led away by novel opinions ; and surely the matter is too important, and too deeply concerns our humanity, to be lightly disposed of.

The spirit of God bloweth upon me,  
The breath of the Almighty giveth me life.  
My countenance is as thine before God,  
I also am formed out of the clay—  
—So long as a breath is in me,  
And the spirit of God in my nostrils,  
My lips shall not speak wickedness,  
Nor my tongue utter calumny.—

Is this feebleness or strength ?

A. The highest degree of force in words.

E. And among the Orientals a word is the utterance of thought, of will, of all the inward energies of the soul. It was early remarked, how great a mystery is involved in the

\* Ecclesiastes, xii. 7.

fact, that the soul thinks, the tongue speaks, and the hand executes; that our soul thinks, and others understand and listen to it merely by means of the breath of the mouth. To God himself nothing could be ascribed, it would seem, more powerful than a word, a breath. It is compared to the flame of fire, to the hammer which breaks the rock in pieces. When all things fail, the breath of God still endures and is still efficient—efficient as wind, reviving as rain that descends and imparts life and fertility.

A. That is the breath of God in nature, the immediate working of his omnipotent will—but the breath of God in man?

E. He too, man himself is mighty, because he partakes of a divine inspiration; so that flesh, and spirit, i. e. human weakness, and Godlike energy, are placed in continual contrast.—Recollect an expression, which we find even before the flood, and in the mouth of God himself.

My spirit shall not always  
Continue to act in men,  
For they are flesh.

Observe too, how their fleshly nature, by a general corruption of manners, shows its character especially in sensuality and imbecility. Nay, go back to the first representation of man, with which God introduces him into the world. He was to be an image of the Elohim, a visible manifestation of their invisible powers, disposing and ruling like them, and in their stead. Let me too, since you have been gratified with an elegy on the weakness of man, repeat to you a Psalm\* descriptive of his dominion and power; a Psalm, which in the prattling of infants establishes for God a strong hold of admiration and praise, at which every enemy falls prostrate; a Psalm, which crowns man with the dignity and majesty of the angels, as a God of this lower world, as a triumphant ruler over all the works of Jehovah, which lie prostrate at his

\* Ps. viii.

feet. It is worthy, and might seem intended, to be uttered forth beneath the open and wide expanse of the starry heaven, which is even now outspreading itself over our heads.

Jehovah, our God, how excellent is thy name  
In all the earth!

Thy praise is sounded above the heavens.

From the mouth of babes and sucklings  
Hast thou prepared a strong hold of praise  
Against thy foe; at which he is prostrate.

If then I look at thy heavens,  
At these, the work of thy fingers,  
The moon, and the stars, which thou hast ordained

What is man, that thou art mindful of him,  
The son of man, that thou visiteest him,  
In rank, thou hast placed him nearest the Elohim,  
Thou hast crowned him with honour and majesty,  
Hast made him lord of all thy works,  
Hast placed all things under his feet.

His are the herds of sheep and oxen,  
The beasts of the field are his also,  
The fowls of heaven, and the fish of the sea,  
And whatever passeth the paths of the seas.  
Oh Lord, our God, how excellent is thy name  
In all the earth!—

Carry back now this Pindarick song of praise into the history of the creation, from which it was taken, and with what majesty does man appear!—When all else is created, God pauses, as it were, takes counsel with himself, and seems to bring forth the form of man, as from his own heart. The yet uncrowned creation stands still, and waits for its visible God, and creator. If we were to form a representation of man in the style of genuine epick dignity, and elevation, from what more lofty and comprehensive idea could it proceed?

A. Hebrew poetry however has not furnished such a representation.

**E.** To furnish such in the worldly sense of poetical representation, was not its purpose ; since man has provided himself with this, in manifestations of both good and evil. What have not men done upon the earth, in works of art, and in the exercise of power ? What have they not attained ? To what have they not aspired ? What a splendid and lofty theme is presented to the poet, who would merely celebrate this historically, in its leading and most important *facts* ! and that whether he sung the triumphs of the spirit of man in the inventions of science and art, or the operations of his hand, the deeds of his almost omnipotent will.—But, as was remarked before, it was not the aim of this poetry to carry out the ideal of man in a physical, but in a spiritual sense. How sublime and beautiful are the conceptions, which it has drawn from the image of God in the human form, and exhibited through the Old and New Testament ! Son of God was predicated of Adam ; friend of God, of Enoch, of Abraham, and the most favoured of the patriarchs. A second Adam appeared, to exhibit, and to verify to his brethren the true form and character of a son of Jehovah, to build up the human race to this idea in all worth and perfection of being. It seems to me, there is no purer and more sublime conception of the ultimate end and aim of the being of man in either the poetry or prose of all other nations.

**A.** If only it be not too pure, and too lofty for our comprehension ! What know we of God ? and how can men imitate God, unless he humbles himself below the proper powers of his being ? The view, which we take of our destination, and of our duty, must be human, not divine.

**E.** The moral views exhibited here unite both ; for you just now observed, that the weakness and abasement of man, was pictured in it with no less truth. In relation to our bodies we cannot be the sons of God according to the pure conceptions of the East, for God has no outward figure, and we are formed of the earth. But his finger has fashioned us ;

and the lips of Jehovah have moved, as it were, over the mouth and countenance of man with a breathing of kindness and love. There they still move and breathe upon us ; for in the animated countenance the Spirit of God is visible. In poetry, which does not overlook the weakness of man, in order vainly to ascribe to him the self-sufficiency and independence of a divine being, but which at the same time is not seduced by his weakness to deny his real dignity and high destination ; in this appears a child of God formed for eternity, but yet a feeble and a mortal child.

A. Yes, truly a child ! for the poetry and morals of this people are extremely child-like. All their conceptions are referred back to God, and every thing is derived from the will of God, so as at length must enfeeble the will of man, as well as his powers of research. It becomes a blind or fanatick devotion, in short, Islamism.

E.

Can the papyrus grow up without sap ?  
 The water lily increase without moisture ?  
 It is yet green, and has not been cut down,  
 But while all else flourishes, it withers away.  
 So is the course of all, that forget God,  
 The hope of the ungodly shall perish.  
 That is cut off in which he trusted,  
 His confidence is the spider's web.  
 She leans upon her house, it will not stand,  
 She holds fast to it, but it cannot endure.  
 So he stands green and fresh, at early dawn,  
 And sends forth his branches in the garden,  
 He entwines the rock with his roots,  
 They encompass the whole wall.  
 At once he is away from his place,  
 Which says to him " I never saw thee."

A. You have given me a prolonged image, but no answer.

E. The picture itself is an answer. Poetry without God

is a showy papyrus without moisture ; every system of morals without him, is a mere parasitical plant. It makes a flowery display in fine words, and sends forth its branches here and there; nay, it insinuates itself into every weak spot and crevice of the human soul ; but the sun rises, and it vanishes. The man that invented it himself denies it, and its place and condition are no where known. Yet I would not by this, detract any thing from the worth of psychological investigations, or even descriptions ; but the first, the most ancient and child-like poetry and morals, could not be psychology, otherwise it would forever remain a labyrinth of dark sayings. What was admitted with regard to the poetry of nature, holds still more in regard to the ethical poetry of the most ancient times ; the idea of God must give it intelligibility and simplicity, feeling and dignity. The child is directed by the word of his father, the son is formed by the modes of thinking, and character of the author of his existence. The fear of God, which admits not a spirit of argumentation, was here also the beginning of human wisdom.

A. For the beginning it was well, and helped him on his way. But why must it always accompany him ? It holds him perpetually in leading strings, and the child never learns to go alone. Must not this be the case in the East ? From the childish habits and feelings transmitted from the primeval world, come the burdensome and slavish Mosaick ceremonial, and instead of the human spirit's elevating itself, it sank still lower. Why was this, but because it always looked to God with a slavish fear, and never learned to know its own powers ?

E. What occasioned the Mosaick ceremonial, we shall learn in its proper time, and will transfer no later notions to a period, when milk and honey yet flowed for the child-like capacity of man in morals also. For the child it is well, when it follows implicitly the instruction of the father. In the ethical poetry of the Orientals the idea of God is the



sun in the firmament, which illuminates the whole horizon of human existence, and even at a late period marked, with its clear and distinct radiance, the dial plate of particular relations and duties. To us of the present day, this sun seems too burning and oppressive ; then its light was indispensable ; for this simple, child-like morality, enforced by reverence for the Divine Being, and wholly derived from him, was to guide the nations of the earth in the way, and must therefore be imparted to them with a character thus child-like, simple, rigid, and elevated. Both in this, and the future world, God was here represented as the guide and father of men.

A. In the future world too ? There we come upon the subject of which we at first intended to speak. At how late a period then, let me remark, and how gradually, from what trifling considerations, and these mostly inferences, which infer too much, and proofs, which prove too much, nay, from blind wishes, and obscure presentiments, has man's hope of immortality been produced ! Adam was earth, and knew of no immortality. He saw Abel lying in blood ; the first death was bewailed, although there was no dead to bewail,—yet no angel came to comfort the mourners with the least hope of immortality. His soul was in the blood, and was poured out upon the earth ; thence it cried towards heaven, and was buried with the blood. Such was the faith of the first world, and even after the flood.\* The fathers fell asleep, and their life was ended. Their age is named, and nothing more ; or they are gathered to their fathers, that is, to the grave. This was in time shaped into a realm of shades. But read, throughout the Old Testament, the dark, indistinct, and disconsolate, poetical representations of this realm of shadows—or permit me to offer only one of them to the remembrance of my deceased friend. If it were possible for him to be about us, he would surely now be hovering here ; but even this truth-telling elegy declares, that it is impossible, that there is no return from the dominions of the dead.

\* Gen. ix. 4—6.

14

Man, born of woman,  
Is of few days;  
And full of trouble.  
He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down,  
He fleeth also as a shadow,  
And continueth not.

Upon such dost thou open thine eye,  
And bring me into judgment with thee?  
Among the impure is there one pure?  
Not one.

Are his days so determined?  
Hast thou numbered his months,  
And set fast his bound for him,  
Which he can never pass?  
Turn then from him, that he may rest,  
And enjoy, as an hireling, his day.

The tree hath hope, if it be cut down:  
It becometh green again  
And new shoots are put forth.  
If even the root is old in the earth,  
And its stock die in the ground,  
From vapour of water it will bud,  
And bring forth boughs, as a young plant.

But man dieth, and his power is gone:  
He is taken away, and where is he?

Till the waters waste from the sea,  
Till the river faileth and is dry land,  
Man lieth low, and riseth not again.  
Till the heavens are old, he shall not awake,  
Nor be aroused from his sleep.

Oh! that thou wouldst conceal me  
In the realm of departed souls,\*  
Hide me in secret, till thy wrath be past,  
Appoint me then a new term,  
And remember me again.  
But alas! if a man die,

\* To make the sense here intelligible to the English reader, I have amplified the expression, but without adding to the meaning of the German. Whether the original Hebrew means any thing more than the grave, as given in our common version, seems at least very questionable. Tr.

**He shall never revive.**

So long, then, as my toil endureth,  
Will I wait, till a change come to me.  
Thou wilt call me, and I shall answer,  
Thou wilt pity the work of thy hands.  
Though now thou numberest my steps,  
Thou shalt then not watch for my sin.  
My transgression will be sealed in a bag,  
Thou wilt bind up and remove my iniquity.

Yet alas! the mountain falleth and is swallowed up,  
The rock is removed out of its place,  
The waters hollow out the stones,  
The floods overflow the dust of the earth,  
And thus thou destroyest the hope of man.

Thou contendest with him, till he faileth,  
Changest his countenance, and sendest him away.  
Though his sons become great and happy,  
Yet he knoweth it not—  
If they come to shame and dishonour,  
He perceiveth it not.—

Could the sentiment be more forcibly expressed, that there is no return from the realms of death, that there no knowledge of the happiness or misery of our friends ever reaches us, and that nothing dwells there, but gloomy obscurity, silence, and everlasting oblivion?

E. You are right. But of what return do you suppose the language here is to be understood? Obviously of a return to this life again, to taste the good things of the earth, which Job was so little able to enjoy. And this it seems to me does not interfere with the strongest convictions of immortality. Whose soul after death has ever returned to enjoy the blessings of the earth? That Job fully believed in the continued existence of something in the kingdom of the dead, we see even here, from the wish, that God would hide him there, till his anger was laid aside, and then restore him to life; although he saw, that this was too presumptuous a hope, and himself abandoned it. But let us examine more nearly

the belief of the Orientals respecting a realm of shades, and trace from early times the circumstances, which gave occasion to it, as well as the original notions of the thing itself.

A. In the first conception undoubtedly it was the grave simply, the abiding and everlasting dwelling place of the dead ; only that they thought of them to be still living in their graves. These therefore they denominated houses, of rest, the dwelling places of endless peace. I have read some poems of the Arabians, in which they are represented, as visiting the graves of their friends like dwelling places, conversing with them, while yet in their graves, and watering the dust of their dwellings, or planting them with herbage. In short this has been in the East an ancient and wide-spread illusion, which came down among the Hebrews even to a late period, and gave occasion to numerous traditions of dialogues, of visions, of sufferings, and of journeyings in the grave. As the soul was conceived to be a mere shadow, a living breath, so its place was assigned in subterraneous regions, in a place of rest, and of perfect equality. This it is, which the complaint of Job represents so feelingly, that there kings and slaves, servants and their taskmasters, are all free, all equal and all alike, at rest but powerless, as a shadow without distinction of members, as a nerveless breath. Thus the whole you perceive was a mere illusion. The dead were held so dear, that one could not and must not think of them as dead, even in the grave, and thus they were represented there, as still having an animate though shadowy existence. Their living power and energy were destroyed, and they only wandered and flitted in the realms of the dead, in the dark nether-world, as limbless and powerless beings. There flow with a noiseless current the rivers of sadness and sorrow, there dwells the king of unsubstantial shadows : there earth-subduing conquerors still delight in their tragick scenes, and cannot free themselves from the dreams of earth ; but they are empty shadowy scenes. So David often prays, that God

would still give him here his songs of joy and triumph, for in the realms of death all is voiceless and still ; there no songs of thanksgiving for triumph over conquered enemies are ever sung. So too the philosophical author of the Book of Ecclesiastes, whom you have adduced as testifying to the doctrine of immortality, says briefly, but well,

What thine hand findeth to do,  
Do quickly, while thou hast power,  
For there is no work nor device,  
There is no knowledge nor prudence,  
In the shadowy realm, whither thou goest.

Call to mind now your favourite Ossian, and his Celts. The fathers of his heroes, whose shadow-realm was in the clouds, grasp at the sword, but it is only air or vapour, a cloud with reddening hues, their arm itself too is a shadow, a breath, that flits with the air. Like them, and like the Hebrews, all ancient nations have had a kingdom of their fathers, a realm of departed souls, where each followed still the employment, to which he had been accustomed on earth. Some have represented them as assembling in green fields, others in the clouds ; the Orientals, who adhered to the primitive conception of the grave, placed them under the earth. The whole is only a cherished illusion, not a clear and well assured conception of the immortality of the soul. It is only a shadow, like the subject-matter, which it represents.

E. Every shadow presupposes a substance, a real being. An illusion itself is a shadow of truth. Would the illusion of immortality have been, or have become, as you acknowledge it has, so universal, if it had not had a universal ground in the hearts or in the traditions of the human race ?

A. In the hearts of men was a wish, a friendship, a hope, which produced the pleasing, or the painful dream, and even shaped it perhaps into a universal tradition. Must a man utterly perish as the brutes ? Would not one gladly wish

to live with the sleeping objects of his affection, his fathers, or his children buried in a premature grave? Among the Orientals without doubt the flood gave the first great occasion for the poetical representation of an empire of the dead.—Consider what an impression upon the subsequent traditions must be produced by this monstrous event, the engulfing of the whole living world.

In those days lived the world-subduers,  
The offspring of the sons of God, and the daughters of men.  
They were men of power and violence,  
The renowned heroes of the ancient world.\*

Thus it was the Rephaim, the giants, who groan and wail beneath the waves, whose voice perchance was thought to be heard in the roaring billows, and whose restless motion was felt in the earthquake and the storm at sea. But these were the most ancient and gigantick inhabitants of the empire of death. In process of time these traditions were softened down, and it was the silent congregation of the dead, which Job and the Hebrews described. Still the ghosts of heroes continued always to wander in the nether-world. Ghostly kings were seated upon shadowy thrones; nay, kingdoms and states were there, and armies of the slain. (For among the Orientals not persons only, but things, the instruments of power and pride, had each its spirit, and consequently its ghost). Thus this subterranean realm came to have in time its king also, Belial, the king of powerless and unsubstantial shades; and Scheol became his palace, a royal residence of invincible strength, with brazen gates and bolts. What once became

\* Gen. vi. 4. The name *Scheol* itself is derived from that, which sinks under or is buried, as from the depths of the earth, or the bottom of the sea. In many representations *Scheol* occurs as the ground of a sunken world, and the Rephaim, the shadow-forms, the ghosts, have always in Job and the prophets something of the gigantick. The passages, in which *Scheol* occurs, have been collected and critically examined by Scheid, (diss. ad cantic. *Eisaiæ*).

his prey he never suffered to escape, and no captured soul could ever be redeemed from his grasp. Even in the New Testament this mythology has given occasion to many conceptions, as of the king and the conqueror of hell, and of death, who opens the gates, which none could open, who subdues powers, and frees captive souls, which none could subdue and set free. The sense of these images is quite unappropriate, if we apply them to our notions of hell and of death, but within the proper sphere of ancient poetical description they present a sublime picture of a hero, and of a ruler, whose dominion is universal. He in whose power were the souls of men, (he who had the power of death), was an unrightful usurper, and the anointed of God wrested from him his prey. For four thousand years you perceive men were, without assistance, a prey to these terrific, ghostly powers, slaves, who all their lives long must tremble in the bonds, and with the fear of death. To this is to be ascribed such sorrowful lamentations, as those of Hezekiah, and such want of courage in view of death, which other nations met with heroick resolution. The Hebrews were still in this point one of the weakest nations of the earth. The sad and mournful images of their ghostly realm disquieted them, and were too much for their self-possession. They were even more painful, than a belief in utter annihilation.

E. I have permitted you to carry through your discourse, and your historical deduction of the kingdom of the dead has been to me like the melancholy plaint of one in affliction, who finds pleasure in wandering among the shades. You have studied these realms it seems with much attention. But turn your eyes now upward to the stars. That is the book of immortality which God unseals and spreads open to us, and to all people and nations, with every returning night. Think too of the quickening, life-giving influence of the morning, which every day is the symbol of our resurrection, as sleep is an image of death—a symbol that speaks with

clearness, and is every where understood. But do you know of no other hope, that was revealed to men at a period sufficiently early to support them against the terrors of the grave? Who was it, of whom it was said at an early period?

He lived the friend of God,  
And while he walked with God,  
He was seen no more,  
For God had taken him up.

A. You do not consider this saying, the fragment perhaps of an ancient song, as a narrative surely of the translation of Enoch to heaven? It is the soothing echo from the grave of one, who had prematurely died, and had not attained to the years of his father, and his brothers. When children have yet no conceptions of the other world, we say to them, "Your brother is with God! God has taken him away so early, because he loved him, because your brother was so innocent." The first generations of men were still in the same sort of childhood.

E. I willingly admit it, and at all events a premature removal of an object of affection would make the child-like impression, which you describe; just as other nations have said and believed, "This innocent and beautiful youth the Gods have carried off; this delicate and guileless maiden Aurora has stolen away." But permit me to say, that this softening of the language in my opinion is hardly satisfactory for the narrative in question. The pervading tradition even of other nations has connected with it a more pregnant sense, and the poetry of the Hebrews has obviously attributed to it the same, and built upon it. "God took him to himself, God took him to his own dwelling place," became afterwards on many occasions the expressive phrase to denote the fate in the other world of those, who were the favoured of God, and without doubt the notion was derived from this most ancient friend of God. He lived in evil days, and was zealous



For the honour of God; perhaps was scoffed at and persecuted, as in later times was Elijah, the partaker of the same glorious fate, and the former, as well as the latter, God would also in the end distinguish with the marks of his approbation. Not perhaps in so brilliant a manner as Elijah, yet with the same majestick dignity surely, God conducted his chosen friend into his own eternal dwelling. So Paul understood the expression, so the last book of scripture received and applied it in the image of the two witnesses ascending to heaven in a cloud, and so it is understood by the kindred nations of the East. The Arabians have a multitude of fables respecting the wise, the innocent, the lonely, the zealous, the prophetick, the persecuted and despised Idris, (so they call Enoch) whom God received into heaven, and who dwells in Paradise. Other nations place him upon Albordy, the dazzling mountain, on which was held the assembly of the Gods, as tradition also speaks of his intercourse, not with Jehovah, but with the Elohim. This translation of Enoch, instructive as it was, came at once to be also a matter of peculiar interest, and full of hope, as prefiguring a like removal to himself of other friends of God.

A. What others? I recollect no other example but Elijah.

E. Abraham was a friend of God like Enoch, and you know how distinctively God is called the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, and for him they all live.\* For this world these patriarchs were dead, and without enjoying the promises, which God had given them; they entered into the dwelling place of their heavenly friend, into a better Canaan; and the congregation of their fathers became the beautiful family and

\* Nothing is proved here from the language of the New Testament. The argument there on the contrary (Matt. xxii. 32. Heb. xi. 13—16) derives increased evidence from the fact, that these conceptions were made the ground of representations, in the Old Testament.

national phrase of the Hebrews, their kingdom of the dead, or of the blessed. They were like Abraham, like Enoch, in the Paradise of God their friend.

A. I understand the expression of being gathered to their fathers, as meaning nothing more than the depositing of one's dead body, with those of his fathers, in the family tomb.

E. Certainly this external custom, which with good reason is held dear by every people, that has not been broken off from its own stock, and that retains an affection for its ancestry, this I say has undoubtedly had an influence in preserving the faith spoken of, and rendered it visible, as it were, to the sense, but by no means includes the whole of it. Abraham was gathered to his fathers, though he was not buried with them, and Jacob wished to go down to the realm of shades, to his beloved son, although he supposed him to have been torn in pieces by wild beasts. You have even yourself related, how all the nations of the earth, even those we call savage, believe in such an assemblage of their fathers in the realm of departed souls ; and it is affecting in a surprising degree with what joy the father goes thither to the embraces of his son, the son to meet with his father, the mother with her child, and friend with friend. I will give you an affecting elegy, as a proof of this, and in books of travels we have a multitude of such witnesses and proofs. Such were those nations, whose departure was among the shades, and who must have formed their notions on the old tradition alone. From this each nation formed for itself its kingdom of the dead, its congregation of the fathers, according to its own notions and modes of life. The Hebrew race adhered to the conceptions of their fathers, and since it was the highest glory of the race, that Abraham, that their father, was the friend of God, could it be, that God who loved him here, and who had accompanied him with support and consolation to the brink of the grave, would now desert him in the grave ? that he would leave him to the gloomy

night of a tyrannical and all observing kingdom of the dead ? Even now, was the language of their faith, he shows himself as a friend, and hospitably opens to him his light and glorious dwelling. *He has taken him to himself*—is the beautiful language even of the Psalms.

A. I recollect one ; but to me it is very obscure.

E. We are even now arrived at the house, and will read a couple of them before we separate. One of them\* sounds very much like an evening prayer, and some have even considered it as a funeral elegy of the poet himself.

Hear this, all ye nations,  
Give ear, all inhabitants of the world !  
Ye men of low, and men of high degree,  
The rich and the poor, listen together.

My mouth shall speak wisdom,  
My heart shall meditate of prudence,  
I will give ear to a dark parable,†  
I will solve my deep problem on the harp.

Why should I fear in the days of evil,  
Though the injustice of foes environ me ?  
These have confidence in their strength,  
And boast themselves of their great riches.

Can one of them, then redeem his brother,  
And deliver him from death ?  
Can he even give to God a ransom for him ?  
Too costly is the price of the soul,  
He bringeth no ransom forever.

That he may always continue to live ?  
That he may never behold his grave ?  
He must behold it ; for even the wise die,  
Just as the fool and the senseless perish,‡

\* Ps. xlix.

† The poet listens to his song on the harp, as if it came to him from the strings of his instrument. Lyrick poetry, singing and instrumental musick, were then united. The problem, which the poet proposes to solve, is the prosperity of the ungodly, as we see from what immediately follows.

‡ The fool and the senseless person are here synonymous, as the last verse of the Psalm shows.

And leave their wealth to strangers.

Their grave is now their house forever,

Their tent henceforth from age to age.

If they call countries by their names,

The man in honour\* abideth not always,

In death he shall be esteemed as the brute,

He must go hence.

This is their fate ; they also perish ;

And those after them make them their song.†

As sheep they are driven to Hades,

There death shall feed upon them,

And soon the upright shall rule over them.

Their image is with empty shades beneath,

And there is their habitation.‡

But my soul will God redeem from Hades,

He will receive me to his habitation.

Fear not then, when one is made rich,

When the glory of his house is increased.

\* The man in honour, is one of those distinguished men, who give their names to countries.

† I leave it undetermined, whether we are to understand here a song of praise, or of reproach and mockery. Of both in the mean time they would be alike ignorant in the realm of shades.

‡ Herder expresses briefly some doubt in regard to the sense of the last words here, and the editor, Prof. Justi, has given a few critical remarks upon the whole verse. Instead of translating it, I have thought it better to give the substance of both his and De Wette's views. The words translated, "death shall feed upon them," they understand, as a continuance of the metaphor in the preceding line. Death is a shepherd, and after driving them to the nether world, "feeds them there." The next line they translate, "the upright shall tread upon them," i. e. upon their graves, or their dead bodies, with triumph. The remainder Prof. J. translates "their rock decays" i. e. the rocky cave, in which they are buried, and "the realm of shades is their dwelling," henceforth their only dwelling. De W. "The nether world mars their form." "By reason of their dwelling place," i. e. the grave. In the preceding parts of the Psalm, where Herder differs from the English translation, De Wette very nearly coincides with it. Ta.

In death he shall carry nothing away,  
And his glory shall not descend with him.  
While he lived, he did well for himself,  
And thou art praised, if skilled for thine own good.  
Soon he goes to the dwelling of his fathers,  
His eternal house, and sees the light no more ;  
Now proud of wealth, and void of sense,  
Then like a brute, and banished hence.

A. I have never apprehended so clear a connexion in the sentiments of the Psalm.

E. Yet it is accordant with the meaning of the words ; and the distinction, which we spoke of, is clearly recognized. The merely sensual souls, who indulge in vain boasting and display, who know nothing but the pleasures of sense, and are without understanding, are driven down like sheep, where (according to a representation sufficiently horrible) death feeds upon and devours them ; while God redeems the souls of the upright from Hades, and receives them into his own habitations. The former waste away a prey to death, and the upright rule over them in the morning, i. e. soon, early, as after a night of sleep, the light of a fairer morning goes forth. The other Psalm, to which I referred, marks this distinction still more clearly. In that, God takes the dead body of his chosen under his protection even in the grave, and from the night of the grave points out a secret path to the dwelling places of his own heavenly light.

A. I understand that Psalm as little as the former one. It must be I suppose the prayer of a priest labouring under disease, whom God supplies with food and drink, and who prays for a speedy restoration to health.

E. It is as clearly a prayer of David, as it is one of his most peculiar and characteristick Psalms. His form of expression, and his personal character may be traced in every verse.

Preserve me O God, for in thee do I trust,

I said to Jehovah, thou art my God,  
My happiness hangs all upon thee.\*

The sanctuaries of his land,  
I hold them dear,†  
In them is all my delight.

Let others serve their many idols,  
And offer them strange sacrifices.  
They are offerings of blood ; such will I not offer.  
I will not take their names upon my lips.

Jehovah is my portion, and my cup,  
In abundance thou hast cast me my lot,  
Pleasant places have fallen to me,  
And I have a goodly heritage.

Therefore will I praise Jehovah,  
Who hath given me counsel,  
By night also my heart goeth after him.

Jehovah is continually before me,  
He is my defence, I shall not be moved.  
Therefore my heart rejoiceth,  
My soul exulteth within me,

My body also shall rest secure,  
For thou wilt not leave my soul  
To dwell in the realm of shades,  
Nor suffer thy faithful servant  
In the grave to see corruption.  
Thou wilt show me the way to life,  
The fulness of joy in thy presence,  
And of pleasures with thee forever.

This Psalm seems to me, both in regard to its contents, and in its relation to the character of David, to be perfectly clear. The expression, "God is on my right hand," i. e. as a friend he acts in conjunction with me and for me, the circumstances enumerated, that God has given him a fair inheritance

\* Herder defends this translation by supposing a different reading of the text. De Wette translates "there is no happiness for me without thee," or independent of thee. Tr.

† Here also a conjectural reading is adopted and the conjunction attached as the suffix pronoun to a preceding word. Tr.

not received from his father, (the crown among God's peculiar people); this has fallen to him through the councils of God and his disposition of the lot, (as their lot once fell to the tribes, and God often instructed and sustained him in his afflictions); therefore he cleaves so fast to God, longs after him, esteems so highly the sanctuary of Jehovah, and thinks upon it by day and by night, will have no intercourse with foreign idolatrous kings and their offerings; but esteems Jehovah his portion and his cup, i. e. an inherited golden cup, used on festival occasions, the honour and ornament of the family, a costly inheritance, which he will exchange for nothing else—do not all these appear to you very intelligible, and characteristick of David? Every trait can be authenticated from his life and from other Psalms.

A. And what further in relation to the future world?

E. God, who was his friend, his father, and his portion here, will not leave him even in the night of the grave: (there his body rests under the special protection of God); his faithful friend and servant—Chasid—he will not give over to the terrors of the realms of death; he will show him a way from the darkness of the grave, to his own dwelling of light, and receive him there with hospitality as a father and friend.—You see clearly in this the conception, which was formed from the translation of Enoch, which the congregation of the Chasidim, the friends of God, Abraham, Moses, &c. more distinctly impressed, which afterwards the translation of Elijah confirmed, and which finally became the Paradise, the dwelling of the fathers, and a perpetual banquet of joy in Abraham's bosom—conceptions, which we still find in the New Testament, and which here were spiritualized, illustra-

\* That David is to be regarded in this Psalm, as the type of the Messiah, is seen from the New Testament, but does not belong here. We speak here of the character of the person there speaking, and of the sentiments contained in the Psalm according to their proper connexion.

ed, and beautifully confirmed, as the last poetical book of scripture especially shows.

A. But it is said, the Hebrews adopted the Egyptian mythology of the Islands of the dead.

E. Two poets, who were fond of Egyptian imagery, Moses and Job, have once used an expression denoting a quick passage by ship into the other world; and these are the only traces of it. This mythology never gained a place among the Hebrews, and could not; for they had much better images belonging to the traditions of their own race and nation. They knew nothing of judges in Hades, nor of Charon; and their Belial is any thing else rather than one of these forms. He is, as you observed, a king of powerless shades, and Scheol, hell, is his kingdom, his dwelling place. Their kingdom of the fathers in the presence of God, is surely not derived from Egypt.

A. And the resurrection of the dead?

E. It is a conception pertaining to the kingdom of the Messiah, as this was already confirmed by the figurative descriptions of the prophets; and we shall speak of it hereafter. For the present I must bid you good night! we are both going into the arms of the representative and image of death, and, according to the later analogical representation of the poets, the souls of the good are even in sleep in the Paradise of God.

## APPENDIX.

### 1 JOB'S DESCRIPTION

#### OF THE KINGDOM OF THE DEAD.\*

Wherefore did I not perish in the womb?

Why not expire, as soon as I was born?

Why did the knees receive and sustain me?

Why did I learn to hang upon the breast?

Now should I have lain still and been quiet,

\* Job, iii. 11. x. 20.



I should have slept and been at rest  
 With kings and rulers of the earth,  
 Who built desolate places for their graves;  
 With princes who had abundance of gold,  
 And filled with treasures their houses of death.  
 Like an untimely birth I had been buried,  
 Like infants which never beheld the light.

There the wicked cease from troubling,  
 There the weary are at rest.  
 There the prisoners rejoice in their freedom,  
 And hear not the voice of the oppressor.  
 The small and the great are equal,  
 The servant is free from his master.

Are not my days few, and my life as nothing?  
 Let me alone, that I may rest a little,  
 Before I go hence, and return no more,  
 To the land of darkness and the shadow of death,  
 The land of dark obscurity and gloomy shadows,  
 Where disorder reigns, and even the light is as darkness.

## 2 SKETCHES FROM AN ARABIAN ELEGY

### ON THE DECEASED MOTHER OF A HERO.\*

We held our swords and lances ready,  
 Yet fate without an onset slew us.  
 We held swift horses on the foot,  
 And yet they bore us not away  
 From swift destruction's touch.  
 Whoever lived and loved not this fair world?  
 And yet enjoyment here is sought in vain.  
 Thy portion in this life and all we love  
 Imparts but visions and phantastick dreams.

\* This is inserted here to show how poor are the consolations of a people, who are without the hope of immortality. The leading thought in Arabick poems of this kind is, "the grave is our eternal dwelling, the dead are inhabitants of the dust, which waits for us all. The voice, which they utter there, is but the hollow and sepulchral sound of the dead," &c. How much more beautiful ideas on the other hand were gradually unfolded in the poetry of the Hebrews will be shown in the specimen following this. *On x. iii. c. l.*

Divine compassion strews the balm,\*  
 Upon the face, whose beauty is its veil.  
 The body wastes away beneath the earth,  
 While thought to us still paints it fresh and new.  
 The robe of honour over thee is spread,  
 For thine own son thy power retains.

Now may thy lowly bed of rest†  
 Imbibe the droppings of the morning cloud,  
 Gentle as thine own hand hath been.

To thine own place hast thou thyself betaken,  
 Where not the South, nor yet the Northern breeze,  
 The sweet perfume of incense wafts to thee,  
 Nor sprinkles o'er thee soft and cooling showers.

A dark abode, where every dweller stays  
 A stranger, banished always from his home,  
 And all its ties asunder torn.

There dwells the chaste, the self-protected,  
 Still pure as water in the clouds of heaven,  
 Reserved, but true and faithful in discourse;  
 The great physician now has healed her pain.

We still but help each other to our graves,  
 And generations following after still,  
 But trample on the heads of those before.  
 How many an eye that once was gazed upon,  
 Is now filled full with stony earth and sand ‡!  
 How many now their eyes have closed forever,  
 Whom no misfortune ever blinded.  
 Take refuge, Saiphoddaulah, in thy patience,  
 And mountains cannot reach thy firmness;  
 For much of time and change hast thou endured,  
 And through all change hast thou remained the same.

\* A fragrant powder, which the Arabians strewed upon the face of the dead. The veil here spoken of is that, with which the body of the dead was covered.

† A common wish uttered by the Arabians at the grave. They believed that even the dead were refreshed by it. They planted their graves also with evergreen trees, and with flowers, which the women on festival days sprinkled with water. See Reiske in Motanabbi, from the translation of which the traits exhibited in this little piece are taken.

‡ An allusion to a powder for the eyes, a well known ornament among the Orientals.

**THE LAND OF THE FATHERS, ACCORDING  
TO THE ISRAELITISH NOTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS.**

He's gone from earth! to what far region going?\*

The friend of God—but here no longer known,  
The friend of God—our God his love bestowing  
Has placed him near his throne.

The vile and Godless crew, to sin consenting,  
Go down in death beneath the ocean's waves,  
Their ghosts with rage and shame themselves tormenting  
In hell's deep hollow caves.†

But after him the Godlike throng pursuing  
Shall dwell in Paradise at God's right hand,  
Where now, as strangers here the prospect viewing,  
They see the promised land.‡

Thy friend, Elijah, there at length appearing,||  
Shall soar a conqueror to the lofty sky,  
Upborne by fiery steeds, no danger fearing,  
To thee, our God, on high.

Nor shall his chosen in their graves deserted,  
Be left by him, their friend, to endless night,¶  
But in the realm of shades his rights asserted,  
Shall raise them to the light.

For thy supporting hand, Jehovah, pleading,  
I'll enter death's obscure and gloomy road,‡  
Thy hand shall hold me fast, and upward leading,  
Shall guide to thine abode.

\* Gen. v. 24. Enoch's translation.

† Gen. vi. 17. The deluge is here referred to, as the probable origin of the Hebrew notion of the Rephaim in the kingdom of the dead. Job xvi. 5. 6.

‡ Gen. xv. 8. The congregation of the fathers. See Matt. xxii. 32. Heb. xi. 13—16.

|| 2 Kings ii. 11. 12. Ps. lxxviii. 18. Hab. iii. 8. ¶ Ps. xvi. 10. 11.

‡ Ps. xxiii. 4. 6. Ps. lxxiii. 23. 24.

Though from my sight the earth and sky are vanished,  
 Though soul and body languish, faint, and die,  
 Yet thee shall I behold, nor e'er be banished,  
 In fairer worlds on high.\*

And hell with all its captive throng restoring,  
 Shall he, who once descended, upward bring,  
 I hear them cry, in realms of light adoring,  
 Oh death ! where is thy sting ?†


\* Ps. lxxiii, 25. 26.

† 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.



## DIALOGUE VIII.

Of poetry which relates to providence. Whether it represents the events which take place in the world, as resulting from a game of chance, which God is playing with them. Whether its sublime representations of the agency of God, as contrasted with that of man, tends to bring the soul to a state of inaction. Explanation of certain ancient traditions, from which the later representations of providence were derived. Representation of God, as the avenger of secret sins in the history of Cain. Affecting and poetical traits in the narrative. Rectitude united with benignity in early apprehensions of God. Transition to certain animated personifications in the poetry of later times. Of blood calling for vengeance, of crying sins, of the bird of retribution, &c. Explanation of the language of God to Cain. Of the judgment of the deluge. By what principles we are to judge of events of this sort. In what style of representation the traditions of this event were conceived. New form and appearance of the earth after the deluge. Of the traditions respecting giants, the sons of God, the journal of events in the Ark, the olive leaf, the rainbow and the incense of the first offering upon the renewed earth. Why the rainbow became the sign of a new covenant. Of the rainbow in the poetry of Northern nations, represented as a giant's bridge. Of the tower of Babel. Of the aim and the style of the whole narrative. What is meant by the expression, a mighty hunter before the Lord. Implied derision and mockery in the whole tradition. General character of poetry relating to Babylon throughout the Scriptures. Isaiah's elegy on the king of Babylon. Of God as the conqueror and punisher of tyrants. Vindication of the brief antitheses, which occur in the poetical descriptions of providence. Impression made by this poetry on the heart. Comparison of Oriental with other forms of poetry in regard to providence. Pictures of providence from Job. Service which this poetry has rendered to humanity. Appendix, containing two Psalms and Job's Pindaric ode in praise of true wisdom.

 In a social conversation, at which our two friends were present, many touching proofs of an over-ruling providence were related. Examples were mentioned showing how singularly many were forewarned of misfortune, and even thereby snatched from danger, how richly the children of the

poor and virtuous are often provided for, how unexpected deeds of baseness are brought to light, and punished according to the law of rigorous retribution, and how the prayers of the upright and pious are often answered in a remarkable manner, with other things of the like kind. Each of the company had contributed his mite from his own experience, and the company separated with very agreeable impressions. Our Oriental friends remained together, and Alciphron pursued his mode of thinking as follows.

ALCIPHRON. Did not the conversation, with which we have been entertained, seem to you, my friend, now and then to partake a little too much of human weakness? If we consider every event, as the result of divine purpose, regard all events as having moral relations, and refer back to God every act, which we ourselves do, with its happy or unhappy results, every thing seems too little, too narrow, and constrained. In our conversations on the subject, you have indeed taken decidedly the opposite side, but have rather calmed my feelings, than convinced my judgment. Even in the poetry of the Orientals, men are disposed of by a game of chance, as the objects, which the invisible mover changes about as he wills, and independently of any choice of theirs. This may indeed, as you recently remarked, give to their poetry a species of dignity and simplicity. Yet I fear it must be only in words, or at best a sort of beclouded and edifying simplicity. It reduces men to a state of stupidity and weakness, in which at length they give themselves up passively to the will of God, and cease to act freely at all. They only sing, praise God in hymns, and in short keep a perpetual holyday. The poetry, of which we are speaking, which shows in sublime contrasts how God works and controls all things, is like a somniferous sound, that puts an end to our doings, a gentle opiate of the soul. It extols the works of God, but neglects to describe with distinctness and effect the characters and doings of men in their progress to-

regards the happiness and misery, which are the consequence of these. It leaves men undistinguished in the dazzling and overpowering light of God's glory, and blinds them in regard to a knowledge of themselves. Or if man will be a judge of the ways of God according to his own limited rule of moral judgment ; how short-sighted, harsh, partial, and arrogant a judge does he become ! The poetry of the Orientals, taken in connexion with their history, shows this abundantly. The former flies, the latter creeps ; in history all is quiescent, or wicked, in poetry comfort is sought by ascribing it to God—and there the matter is ended. It seems to me, that in this point of view it has rendered but little service, either to the understanding, or the heart of man. It has rather held him back, and veiled him with a cloak of divine magnificence, or by bringing his doings in comparison with the course of divine government, placed him upon stilts, where he must either fall, or learn to go alone with great difficulty.

EUTHYPHRON. I see, my friend, the root of your prejudices is still always in yourself, and unless this is eradicated, it is in vain to discourse of the beauty of any poetry whatever. What would be the use of the sublimest poetry in the world, if it were but an opiate for the soul, or a veil for the eyes, to prevent our knowing the real forms of things, and the true course of events. But how, think you, shall we best pursue the inquiry ? Have not these notions, and this representation of divine providence, resulted from the influence of particular traditions and events ? They have at least remained closely connected with these ancient events, and, in their later application even, reference is always had to these. Shall we not then trace the stream from its fountain ? for I confess to you I would not willingly enter into vague and barren discussions under this azure firmament.

A. Neither would I ; and the histories of Cain, of Abel, of the flood, of the tower of Babel, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of the patriarchs, are all alike before us, and from these perhaps all such notions have originated.

**E.** Let us first consider, then, the history of Abel. It stands there like a mournful flower, marked with blood, and in its simplicity just as poetical as it should be, for a proof of the punitive justice and the providence of God.

Where is Abel thy brother ?\*  
 What deed hast thou done ?  
 The voice of thy brother's blood  
 Cries to me from the earth.

And now cursed art thou, an exile in the earth,  
 Which hath opened her mouth,  
 The stream of thy brother's blood  
 To drink from thy hand.

When thou shalt till the ground,  
 It shall not yield thee its strength,  
 A fugitive and vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

What do you most admire in this language, the severity of the judge, or the tenderness of the father ? And who shall inflict vengeance here, if God does not inflict it ? The father ? But shall the father avenge the blood of his son upon his first-born ? And must the guilt remain unpunished ? Shall the blood of a brother be shed like the blood of a brute, and men be hardened in savage cruelty and wickedness ? And how if the murderer conceal his crime, and when called in question, rebel against his father himself ? The voiceless earth could not reveal the transgression to the father of the murderer, but to God it made known the deed ; the blood cried out and called for punishment. Observe how naturally, and how forcibly, every thing is set forth here,—the blood crying for vengeance, (and for a long time the living soul was supposed to be in the blood ; ) the ground proclaiming the deed ; the maternal earth, which received the blood of her son from the hand of his brother, drank it, as it were with horror, and afterwards refused to the murderer the free enjoyment of her fruitful energies. Observe, with what strict justice God in-

\* Gen. iv. 9.



sets punishment ; for the curse, which he pronounces, only unfolds the consequences of sin. The murderer could no longer remain in the house of his father, for there he would be the occasion of misery to himself and to all. He could not stay in the region, where the crime was committed ; for the blood raised its voice, the echoing earth cried out, and he himself said, " Every one that finds me, will slay me ; I must be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth." The merciful judge, therefore, did what the perplexed criminal knew not how to do. He removed him from his family, and from the circumstances which awakened his recollection and horror of the deed. He gave him another, perhaps unfruitful and mountainous, but for him secure region, and even became himself surety for the preservation of his life. Thus the blood of his brother was atoned for without a bloody revenge. The living is spared and punished. Do you not then consider this history, as a model of paternal justice ? and is not the whole tradition, in its several traits, fitted to alarm, to warn, to sooth, and to benefit ?

A. And has it produced these effects ?

E. Certainly. Recollect the example of blood crying for vengeance even in the last book of the scriptures. The souls, which are represented as under the altar,\* are the blood of the slain, which had been spilled, as Abel here may be conceived, in a figurative sense, to be an offering, as it were, upon the altar. They call for vengeance upon their persecutors but white robes are given them ; they are withdrawn from their blood, and put off in their expectations to the day of God's vengeance. So through the whole of the Old Testament the blood of prophets and witnesses for the truth calls for revenge, but God has reserved it for himself. He is the judge of all violence and outrage, especially of all secret sins and deeds of shame. That, of which no man makes

\* Rev. vi. 9. 10.

complaint, has a voice for him. That, which none on earth can or will punish, he must call to account in right of his authority, as the father and judge of the whole race of man.

Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,  
Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.\*

This is the pervading peculiarity of Biblical poetry, and truly a sublime and instructive idea for the human race. By means of this, God awakened the consciences of men, and softened them, at least through the influence of fear and terror. Their hands were to be restrained from deeds of blood, even the blood of revenge, and hence the voice of misdeeds was made to speak thus audibly.

A. But this purpose is not attained. How unmerciful is the avenger of blood in Arabia even to the present-day; and among the Hebrews, it became necessary for Moses to soften and moderate the existing custom by special laws.

E. From this nothing more can be inferred, than that the fire of revengeful passions was kindled deep in the hearts of this people, and that what was of a good tendency only softened and moderated their cruel and hard-hearted propensities in a less degree, than it should have done. According to the representations of Arabick poetry, the poison of asps distils from the dead body of the slain, and continues to do so, till he is avenged, that is, sprinkled with fresh blood.† A bird of bloody omen rises from the blood, and follows the murderer. Thus, the office of the avenger of blood is inherited from generation to generation, and the avenger becomes in his turn the prey of the avenger. Every tone and word, that, in regard to this maddening passion, tends to soften the human heart, and direct the thoughts upwards, is a gift from

\* Ps. xc. 8.

† A number of Arabick poems containing such sentiments may be seen in the Hamasa, and many proofs of such a belief are found in their history.

heaven, and it is not the fault of the instruction, contained in these traditions and this poetry, but of the revengeful spirit of the Orientals, that it has been applied with no better effect. But there are, in fact, undeniable evidences of moderation, and beautiful examples of it in the Psalms and Prophets. How forcible and concise is the complaint of Job.

Mine eye is dim with weeping,\*  
 On mine eyelids rest already  
 The shadows of death.  
 No robbery is in my hands,  
 And my prayer is pure.  
 O Earth, cover not my blood!  
 Let my cry go up continually!  
 For lo! my witness is in heaven,  
 My witness dwelleth on high.  
 My friends are but mockers;  
 Mine eye looketh with tears to God.

Tender and subdued feelings of this sort are the most beautiful aim of the poet, as they are an honor to humanity.

A. But would it not have been better, if the judge, as a father, had anticipated the crime of Cain, and so every crime, rather than have punished it after it was committed?

E. He did what was possible in the nature of things, and so he does now and always. He did in fact anticipate.

Jehovah looked not upon the offering of Cain,  
 And Cain was wroth, and his countenance fell.  
 Then said Jehovah, why art thou wroth?  
 And wherefore is thy countenance fallen?  
 In doing well, shalt thou not be accepted?  
 And if thou doest evil, lo, sin is lurking  
 (As a ravenous beast †) at thy door.  
 He aims at thee, and thou shalt subdue him.

\* Job. xvi. 16—20.

† The verb here is used in the Arabick of the lurking of wild beasts; and there is no doubt, that sin is here personified as a ravenous beast, a lion, or tiger, that, hungry and blood-thirsty, was lurking at the door of

This was all which could be said to Cain. God spake with him, as with a froward child, and dissuaded him from yielding to that, which was sleeping in his heart, and lurking at his door, like a beast of prey. The crime so near being committed could not have been pictured more truly or more fearfully. And what God did to Cain, he does to every man, if he will but look to his own heart, and listen to the voice of God in his conscience.

A. But how will you vindicate the judge in regard to the deluge? How is it to be justified, that on account of a few leading men and giants he inflicted punishment upon the whole world, suffered every living creature, even the brutes, to perish, "because all flesh had corrupted his way," and delivered eight persons with what could be taken with them into the ark, as alone innocent? Does not this tradition give the most narrow and partial impression, that can be conceived?

E. The judge of the world needs the vindication of none of his creatures! Those destinies, to which the whole earth is subjected, are laws of nature, to which every individual must be subject. It is ill philosophizing over the ruins of a sunken capital of an empire, or of a perished continent. As to the brutes, do they not always follow the destiny of man? and, if we must philosophize, might we not, on the ground of their daily abuse, without much difficulty reason them out of the world? We must not then judge of this event and tradition, and contemplate it as metaphysicians, but in its physical and moral relations, and then see what impression it is fitted to make. All its accounts of the corruption of the human race seem to meet together with a heavy and sad impression.

A. Because they are taken from traditions of a violent

Cain. Lette (in Symbol. liter. Bremens, P. III. p. 563.) adduces two verses out of the Tograi, which are very apposite here. "My friend is where enemies are lurking as lions lurk round the haunts of the young deer." So too the resisting of temptation, and the overcoming of sin, could not be represented to Cain under a more apposite image.

and gigantick race, and come to us only through those, who escaped the deluge.

E. So much the more original are they. The painful and distressing part of the account, and of the whole record of the ark, is the best pledge of its antiquity. Compare our years and our faculties with the years and the faculties of those Titans, the first-born of the ancient world, who yet felt in themselves the fresh energies of creation, and devoted them to oppression, luxury, licentiousness, and crime alone. How much even now can a base man, possessed of power and distinction, accomplish in his brief span of life—and how much, then, could they effect in their thousand years? perhaps too with much cultivation, and an entire predominance of the power of evil. On these grounds, I can readily credit the ancient tradition.

Jehovah saw the wickedness of men,  
That it was great upon the earth.  
Their imaginations, the thoughts of their hearts,  
Were only evil and continually.  
It repented him, that he had made men,

that is, men, who could be so early and so widely sunk and abandoned in wickedness. Here too, therefore, he acts, as a judge, and a father; he gave the earth another ordinance, and subjected it to new laws.

A. To new laws do you say?

E. Obviously. After the flood, the period of human life is visibly diminished, and however one may account for the deluge, it certainly resulted from the natural laws of the earth in the existing stage of its formation. It had been gradually and slowly formed, and raised above the waters. For a long time, and at different periods, the water had stood above the earth, and in the first period of its being inhabited, extensive deluges in all parts of it were not unfrequent. Perhaps too, at that period, only the higher elevations of the earth's surface were at all inhabitable, the remainder being

still under water, or exposed to sudden overflows. A sudden shock, or any essential change, might bring back the water upon the inhabited parts of the earth ; and perhaps this was done by a change in the position of the earth's axis. In short, every thing at that time came into the course, in which it is now proceeding, and the first heroick age must necessarily perhaps be only the temporary condition of the race in the early progress of its development, while shaping (and misshaping) itself in the exercise of its untried powers ; which condition also had been designed with reference to this change in the state of the earth. To the beginning of the development and formation of our race pertained a long period of life, such as scarcely belongs to our condition now. Without doubt there was then a corresponding state of the earth, such as no longer exists. After the flood, God made a new covenant, a new ordinance for the seasons, the customs of life, laws and length of days, and from this point, properly speaking, though still in a dim and obscure dawning of light, our history has its origin. The antediluvian history sounds to us, only as a fabulous account of heroes and giants, coming over the floods of a sunken world.

A.. Would that we knew something more of these fables of giants.

E. We ought to wish for no such thing, and even the few traces that we have of them have been wickedly abused. What fictions have not been invented out of what is said of the sons of God, who went in to the daughters of men ? and yet the expression " sons of God," i. e. nobles, heroes, men of superior power, beauty, and strength, is common and current in all heroick songs:—but we are wandering from our purpose.

A. I do not think so. That this sad fate of the earth, if it was only the course of nature, should be considered as a punishment of the giants, and of their intercourse with the daughters of men ; that Noah should learn to regret himself, as the one alone chosen for deliverance, as the favorite of

God, and the only worthy and upright man—needs an explanation.

E. He was so, and therefore ought so to regard himself. As his name implies, God through him procured the earth rest from the tyrants. He had been greatly afflicted, and saw himself, though in a difficult and painful manner, alone delivered from death. How narrow and limited is his confinement in the ark! With what longing does he open the window of the ark, and permit the birds to fly out! With what emotion, and what feeling of returning confidence, is the first discovered olive leaf of the dove regarded! The whole narrative contains not a word of insult, or malicious joy, over the perished world, but rather the saddened emotion of the little band, who had escaped, who looked upon the first lovely rain-bow, as a sign of the returning sun, and of the favor of God, and who stepped forth, with a kind of dreaming joy, upon the muddy surface of their ancient mother earth. “Jehovah smelled the sweet savor of their first offering, and blessed the earth, and resolved that he would not again destroy it.” Can the feelings of men be more strongly expressed, than God himself here feels them as it were for them? He sees the returning bow in the cloud with the joy of a father, and makes it,—the image of his own goodness, the first glance of the joyous eye of the world upon the dark masses of clouds,—to become the sign of his unchangeable covenant. He encompasses the earth with a fresh and inseparable chorus of joyful seasons, and these still attend its course.

A. I have never contemplated the account in this light, and have often wondered, how a fleeting phenomenon in the clouds could become the memorial of a perpetual covenant.

E. Of a covenant so sure, that, as Isaiah\* beautifully interprets this account, the mountains and hills shall be re-

\* Isa. liv. 7—10.

moved, before this promise of God shall fail. So the traditions of the North, after their fashion, represent the rainbow as a bridge, which shall stand firm even to the end of the world, and can be broken asunder only at the final shaking of the firmament—a stiff and harsh derivation, it must be confessed, from this original and child-like tradition, but yet containing the sense of it. The other wide spread gloss on the subject is indicated here too, that since the world is not again to be destroyed by water, it is to be consumed by fire. In short, my friend, man is a moral being, and should learn to view every thing under its moral aspect. The earth must be punished by the waters of the flood, and those, who were saved, must bring with them into their new world the impression, how fearfully God punished the predominance of crime. The laws prescribed by Noah are therefore strict and determinate. They indicate the height, to which corruption had attained in former times, and sketch, as it were, the first rights of the people, I might say, of brutes and men, on the renewed earth. So soon as in the building of the tower of Babel, an appearance of like proceedings on the part of the great and powerful occurred,—the judgment of heaven is again awake to confound them.

A. Here we come upon a delightful fable! All men are of one speech and one language, and, as if they might always have remained so, as if such marvellous confusion would scarcely have been necessary in the least degree in the natural course of things, they must build a tower, whose top should reach to heaven, and God must find it necessary to keep a watch upon the progress of the building, and use earnest precautions respecting it. He came to the conclusion, it seems, that they would not desist, until he performed, I know not what miracle, upon their lips and language, in order that what had always happened might happen again, that is, that they might be scattered abroad upon the earth. Pardon me, if I find the narrative in itself, and as a specimen



of the judgments of heaven, rather too strongly characterized, by simplicity.

E. If you look at it in this light, it is so. But do you observe in what connexion the tradition occurs?

A. In the midst of genealogical registers.\*

E. And immediately after those, which are divided according to languages, countries, and nations. The collector of these traditions had some experience and understanding, as well as we, and knew, that with nations, tribes, and wandering migrations, languages also were distinguished. But on this very account he inserted here this singular tradition, in order to show by what event men were brought under the hard necessity of being dispersed and separated from each other.

A. And this you suppose was the child-like enterprise of building a tower up to heaven?

E. It is here represented as childish, and has a childish result. Because they were of one speech and language, they would build a tower to heaven, and even while they were building they become diverse in speech and language. They would have a visible mark to prevent their being dispersed, and became dispersed. The purpose of the narrative is obvious.

A. But the descent and fearful precaution of God on account of it?

E. It is obviously said in mockery, as in fact, the whole tradition is of this character. Have you never read the Psalm,

Why do the nations rage,  
And imagine a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth are assembled,  
The rulers take counsel against Jehovah—  
He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh,  
Jehovah shall hold them in derision.

\* Gen. xi.

Here you have the best commentary on the whole narrative. Look at the foregoing chapter. Who ruled in Babel? who was the builder of it?

A. "Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord."

E. And why is he called so? Certainly not for the foolish reason, that he hunted foxes and hares on the plains of Shinar, where there were neither mountains nor forests,—not to mention, that one does not hunt such animals before the Lord, in any peculiar sense. If it were intended to say this, it would indeed be the most weak and simple of all sayings. But what is meant by a hunter in Hebrew?

A. A lurking enemy.

E. "A mighty hunter," therefore means a crafty, lurking enemy, of great power, one who ensnares men, and oppresses them with cunning and force. Such was Nimrod, according to the universal tradition of the East, in which he is often mentioned, and the same thing is contained in the narrative, which you are so much disposed to ridicule. He found a delightful plain, materials, and willing laborers, for building himself a residence and a royal tower. To the subdued and easily deceived savages, that he had drawn together, he pretended, that it was a token of their security and of their lasting union, but in his own purpose it was a monument of his pride and of their slavery. Now you are aware, that the most ancient times represented the skies as the dwelling place of God, and therefore, whatever approached them obtruded itself upon the region peculiarly belonging to him, and, as it were, encroached upon his throne. In just this sense the narrative says,

Go to, let us build a city and tower,  
Whose top may reach to heaven.

And God, condescending to imitate their resolve, says in turn.

Go to, let us go down now,  
And there confound their language.

**They have begun their work,  
And nothing will be restrained,  
Till the work is accomplished.**

**Do you not perceive a continued strain of sarcasm very obvious here?**

**A. I am surprised, that I never remarked it before.**

**E. And the greatest reproach of all lies in the result of their mighty enterprise. They resolved to scale the heavens. God stood in fear for the safety of his throne, was assured that they would not desist from their gigantick enterprize, and to prevent their success—only laid his finger upon their lips, changed the articulation of the breath, and there are the ruins of their enterprize. It is called confusion, Babel, an everlasting monument of their pride, brought low by a mere nothing. The narrative accords with the spirit of the thing. It is the finest example of satire expressed, with unaffected simplicity, by the event itself, where the great and the little, the purposed ascent of men, the descent of God, the confidence and arrogance of the former, the insecurity and dread of the latter, together with the singular means, by which he knows how to free himself from danger, are placed silently side by side. The confusion of that little particle of air, which is articulated in the mouth, does more than a tempest of lightning and thunder; the usurper of the throne of God stands confounded and put to shame. He and his royal tower are—a proverb of reproach. “This was the mighty hunter before the Lord,” who ventured to compare himself with him, and resolved to raise himself conspicuously before his eyes, and mount upward towards the heavens upon the shoulders of betrayed and oppressed hordes of the human race. That my explanation is the true one is witnessed by all the writings of the Hebrew poets respecting Babylon. They all have precisely the tone and character of this first tradition.**

**A. The same tone and character?**

**E.** All are satires upon Babylon, in accordance with the general spirit and expression of this tradition. As it is here, so every where, Babylon is another name for pride, magnificence, arrogance, oppression of the people and of nations, crafty policy and tyrannical domination. It is continually, as it is here, the symbol of daring impiety against God, of arrogant and ambitious enterprises, aspiring to the heavens, and a throne among the stars ; but, at the same time, of confusion and desolation, and of the derision with which God looks upon the giant projects of men. The haughty queen has always, as here, the cup of trembling in her hand, from which she first causes the nations to drink, and must at last drink herself. Her glory is then brought down to the dust, and its scattered ruins are called—Babel.

**A.** You will enable me, I perceive, to look at all the prophets more understandingly, for the poetry which they contain respecting Babylon is in this character.

**E.** The poetry of the Bible respecting other nations is equally distinct and characteristick, as we shall see at another time. Even in the last book of Scripture, Babylon is exhibited in the same form and character, as that in which I have represented it. She has in her hand the cup of abominations, with which she intoxicates the nations ; on her forehead is a name indicative of licentiousness and impiety ; she finally sinks like a millstone cast into the ocean, and over her ruins is heard a song of derision and lamentation, in the same spirit, which this tradition breathes. The controlling mistress of the world, the mighty huntress of men, who arrogated to herself the attributes of Jehovah, is forever put to shame.

**A.** I recollect a beautiful elegy of Isaiah, with which I made myself familiar on account of its reference to the realms of the dead.\* It exhibits the same silent derision, the same

\* Isa. xiv.

sepulchral tones of lamentation, which you have mentioned. It moves in lengthened elegiack measure, like a song of lamentation for the dead, and is full of lofty scorn and contumely from the beginning to the end.

E. Will you read it?

A.

In the day, when Jehovah shall give thee rest  
From thy distress, and anxiety, and thy slavish bondage,  
Then shalt thou take up a song over the king of Babylon,  
And shalt say,

How hath the taskmaster become still!  
The exactor of gold ceased to oppress!  
Jehovah hath broken the oppressor's rod,  
The sceptre of the tyrants,  
That which smote the nations in anger,  
With strokes, which were never remitted,  
Which ruled them with stern severity,  
And oppression that nothing restrained.

Now the whole world is quiet and at rest,  
The nations send forth a song of joy,  
Even the fir trees exult over thee,  
The cedars of Lebanon,  
"Since thou wast laid low, no one comes up  
To hew us down and destroy us."

The ghostly realm beneath was roused for thee,  
It moved to meet thee at thy coming.  
It stirred up for thee the ghostly shades,  
Even all the mighty ones of the earth.  
It raised them up from their thrones,  
All the kings of the nations.  
They all welcomed thee, and said,  
"Art thou also become a shadow like us?  
Art thou, too, made even as we?"

Brought down even to the dead is thy pride,  
And low the triumphal sound of thy harps.  
Thy couch beneath thee is the worm,  
The mould of death thy covering.

How art thou fallen from heaven!  
Bright star! thou son of the dawn!  
How art thou crushed to the earth,

That didst conquer the nations !

Thou saidst in thine heart, " I will mount to heaven !  
Above the stars of God will I exalt my throne !  
I shall sit aloft where the Gods assemble,  
Upon the mountain heights of the North !

" I will mount up above the heights of the clouds,  
I shall become like the Most High !"  
But down to the abyss art thou hurled,  
To the hollow caves of the dead.

And those, that see thee, gaze upon thee,  
They narrowly scan thee, " Is this the man,  
Who made the earth to tremble ?  
And shattered kingdoms in pieces ?"

" The world around he made like a desert,  
He rendered its cities desolate,  
He opened not the prison door of his captives.

The kings of the nations all sleep in glory,  
Each in his own house, his spacious tomb.  
But thou art cast forth from thy grave,  
Like a monstrous and abhorred birth.\*

Covered with slain, whom the sword hath pierced,  
Who sink down among the stones of the pit,  
Thou liest there like a carcase trodden under foot.  
Thou shalt not be united with them in burial,  
For thou hast made thine own land desolate,  
Thine own people hast thou smitten.

The seed of evil-doers shall not be named,  
Nor called to remembrance forever.  
Give their sons to death for the sake of their fathers,  
That they rise not again and inherit the land,  
And fill the country with cities."

I will rise up against thee,  
Saith Jehovah of hosts.  
I will destroy the name and race of Babel,  
The child and grand-child, saith Jehovah.  
I will make it a hold for the porcupine,  
A morass of stagnant water ;  
I will sweep it into the rubbish of desolation,  
Saith Jehovah of hosts.

\* It is customary with Isaiah to compare a family to a tree, and a member of it to a branch. An abhorred and cast off branch, therefore, is without doubt a monstrous and deformed birth.

E. Here you see the haughty oppressor of the nations, her, who arrogantly aspired to heaven, and to build her throne above the stars ; and immediately after the object of God's derision, humbled to the dust, and thrust down to the abyss ; she lies amidst the cast off rubbish of desolation. " The desolate daughter of Babylon " is the name and representation of all biblical poetry respecting Babylon, and many traits in the elegy, which you have read, would seem as if intended for Nimrod and the first building of the tower. But our thoughts are becoming as much dispersed, as the people of whom we are speaking. The leading trait, which we were to remark upon at present, was this, that the poetry of the East tends to make us observe more particularly, how the providence of the heavenly judge dashes the pride of tyrants, and thrusts down to hell that which would exalt itself to heaven.

A. And exalts too that which is low ; here we have therefore an example of those sublime contrasts in the agency of providence, of which we spoke at first. They seem to me quite too monotonous and full of repetition.

E. Just as the parallelism in its general character seemed to you, when you first considered it. These contrasts are one kind of parallelism ; the loftiest and most powerful *mashal*, or poetical exhibition, which such general representations of worldly scenes can admit. Do they not also exhibit the nature of things, and give us a view of the occurrences and changes of the world, as they are in themselves. What do we see in the world, and the things of the world universally, but continual ebb and flow, exaltation and abasement ? Nothing continues, nothing can continue at the same point of elevation. All here below is fluctuating like the waves, and in the sight of God what is this drop of a world, with all its giants and heaven-daring conquerors, but a swelling and bursting bubble. Hesiod and Homer, Æschylus and Pindar, could paint the fleeting billows of worldly

change, as contrasted with the unchanging and unchangeable God of fate, under no form more true or expressive. They picture the contrast of the high and the low, the strong and the weak, as if they had derived it from the East. Now I willingly believe, that such changes of destiny under the despotick governments of the East may be more frequent, more sudden, and more striking. But as to their essential grounds, they are every where the same, the burden and end of the song, the result of human history. To him, who, in reading these contrasts, finds no examples to illustrate them, they stand as unmeaning and empty sounds; but to one, whose memory is stored with facts and the treasures of experience, they are a poetical abridgment of all history, and on this account I place a high estimate upon Job, the Prophets, and Psalms.

A. And our church hymns of course no less, since in these too such contrasts, in regard to the course of providence, are imitated from the Psalms.

E. Certainly. They sound here, to be sure, comparatively unanimated, dull, and unnatural; yet many hymns and Psalms respecting providence are among the finest in our collections. Some are beautifully versified, the sentiment universally intelligible, I might say common place. These hymns too have sufficiently proved their power and influence on the human heart. They are the consolation of the unfortunate, and the support and strength of the poor. They come to him, as a voice from heaven, to console him in his desolation, and they calm and quiet his soul. Job and the Psalms are a store-house of observations and moral reflections on human life, on good and ill fortune, on pride and humility, true and false self-confidence, and confidence in God. And since, throughout the whole, the eye of God is represented as watching over the course of human events, we may say with truth, that this poetry has exhibited the same unity and simplicity in the succession of events in the world, which, as



we before observed, it exhibited in the scenes of nature. The exhibition of art in the poetry of the Greeks is but tawdry ornament compared with this child-like and pure simplicity ; and in reading the Celtick poetry, fond as I am of [it, I always feel as if wandering beneath a clouded evening sky. It presents indeed beautiful scenes in the clouds and on the earth, but without a sun, without God, and without a purpose which is determinate, and capable of giving unity to the whole. Man at last vanishes like a cloudy vapour, while in the East he stands upon a rock, with the everlasting God for his sure foundation.

I will betake myself to God,  
To God will I lift up my voice,  
Who doeth great things and unsearchable,  
Marvellous things without number.

He giveth rain upon the wide earth,  
And sendeth streams upon the dry fields,  
That he may exalt those that are low,  
And raise to happiness those that mourn.

He maketh vain the devices of the crafty,  
And their hands perform not their enterprise.  
He taketh the wise in their own craftiness,  
And precipitateth the counsels of the intriguer,  
So that they meet with darkness in the day-time,  
And grope at noon-day, as in the night.

Thus he saves the poor from their sword,  
And the weak from the hand of the strong,  
So that hope is given to the poor,  
And iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

Happy is the man whom God correcteth,  
And the chastening of the Most High despise not,  
For he maketh sore, and bindeth up,  
He woundeth, and his own hand healeth.

In six troubles will he deliver thee,  
And in seven shall no evil touch thee.  
In famine he shall save thee from death ;  
In war, from the hand of the sword.

From the scourge of the tongue\* shalt thou be hid,  
 Nor be afraid, when the destroyer cometh.  
 At the destroyer and at hunger thou shalt laugh,  
 Nor fear the wild beasts of the earth.

The stones of the field are thy sure allies,  
 And the wild beasts are at peace with thee.  
 Thou knowest that thy tent is secure,  
 Thou returnest, and findest it in safety.

Thou knowest that thy seed shall be many,  
 Thine offspring as the grass of the earth.  
 Thou shalt come to thy grave in full age,  
 As a shock of corn cometh in, in its season.

Let us be thus favoured by the care of providence, and it would be our own fault, if we should on that account become careless and inactive. I leave every one to his own taste, but to me it is obvious, that these simple and unstudied contrasts, (child-like and artless reflections on the course of events from the mouth of aged and experienced men), had a peculiar tendency to nourish the tender plant of a kind of poetry, that breathes confidence in God and in his special and providential regard for the human race. The Orientals, beyond a doubt, produced them; and the most ancient poetry of the Greeks is, in this respect, entirely Oriental in its character. But it was only in this simple form, that they could be apprehended moreover by the most simple and undisciplined understanding, and seize upon the heart of man, when most depressed and most in need of their influence. They are a kind of mirror of the world, and sum up the experience of the long and instructive life of the patriarchs. As mountains grow old, so empires fall into decay; as the fresh leaf puts forth, so new fortunes and new hopes spring up for man—thus the seasons of the year and the periods of human

\* The scourge of the tongue is, according to the parallelism, the bite of a blood-thirsty brute. The destroyer is the lion, which in the following verse is connected with hunger, i. e. a hungry, ravenous destroyer. The last verse clearly explains the three preceding.

life, the scenes of nature and the varying aspects of human destiny, are connected together, and God is the controller of them all. Even at the present day we may hear experienced and moralizing old men, when the fermenting elements of life have worked themselves clear, discoursing in the same tones with Job, the Psalms, and the Prophets, and the incredulous and headstrong youth finds by experience at last, that they have discoursed truly. For the most part, too, the reflections in praise of providence are suggested by the pictures and historical traditions, which we have treated of, or shall treat of,—the flood and the memorials of Divine punishment, the confounding of human purposes and exposure of hidden crimes. From these they proceed, as their source, and terminate throughout in the silent fear of God and wisdom of man—forming without doubt the richest treasure, the most useful poetry and instruction, as the guide of our shadowy and fleeting life. I could wish I were acquainted with a poem, that combined together in its representations the most striking and affecting scenes of providence in our own history. The more simple, the more Oriental would it become in its general characteristics.

#### APPENDIX.

##### 1. A SONG OF PRAISE, ON THE HELP OF GOD.\*

God is our refuge and strength,  
 A sure defence in time of need,  
 Therefore we fear not, though the world be shaken,  
 And the mountains sink in the depths of the sea.  
 Let its floods roar and be tumultuous !  
 Let the mountains tremble at his majesty ;  
 Yet will his refreshing streams  
 Make glad the city of God ;  
 The dwelling place of the Most High.  
 God is in the midst of her ! she is still unmoved !

\* Ps. xlii.

God helpeth her, looking down upon her  
In the time of her need.

The nations rage, and empires sink,  
He thundereth, and the earth is melted.

Jehovah, the God of hosts is with us !

The God of Jacob is our refuge !

Come, behold the works of Jehovah !

Who now maketh the countries deserts,

And now, even to the end of the world,

Maketh wars to cease.

Breaketh the bow and cutteth asunder the spear,

And burneth the chariot in the fire.

“ Be still and know, that I am God !

The king of nations, the ruler of the world !”

Jehovah, the God of hosts, is with us !

The God of Jacob is our refuge.

## 2. A SONG OF PRAISE ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.\*

Praise ye the Lord !

Praise Jehovah, O my soul !

While I live, I will praise Jehovah,

I will praise my God, while I have being !

Put no confidence in men of might,

In a son of man, who hath no strength.

His breath vanisheth, he returneth to the earth,

And all his purposes are cut off.

Happy is he, whose help is the God of Jacob !

Who trusteth in Jehovah, his guardian God,

That created the heavens, and the earth,

The sea, and all that is therein,

And keepeth truth forever.

He procureth justice for the oppressed,

He provideth bread for the hungry.

Jehovah giveth eyes to the blind,

Jehovah raiseth up the bowed down,

Jehovah loveth the righteous,

Jehovah preserveth the strangers,

He supplieth the fatherless and widows,

And subverteth the counsels of the oppressor.

\* Ps. cxlvi.

Jehovah will reign forever !  
 Thy God O Zion from generation to generation !  
 Praise ye the Lord !

### 3. JOB'S ODE IN PRAISE OF WISDOM.

Man hath found an outlet for the silver,  
 The place of the gold, which he fineth.  
 He hath taken iron out of the dust,  
 And molten brass out of the stone.

He hath set bounds to darkness,  
 And every extreme hath he searched out,  
 The stone of dark obscurity,  
 And of the shadow of death.\*

A flood goeth out from the realm of oblivion,†  
 They draw it up from the foot of the mountain,  
 They remove it away from men.

From the earth upward, goeth forth bread,  
 And underneath it is changed as by fire.  
 There in its rocks is found the sapphire,  
 Interspersed with dust of gold.

The way no mountain bird hath seen,  
 The vulture's eye hath not discovered it ;  
 No stately beast hath trodden it,  
 No lion hath ever passed through it.

Man placeth his hand upon the rock,  
 He overturneth the mountain by the roots.  
 He cutteth out rivers from among the rocks,

\* Probably the last stone in the mining investigations of Job ; the corner and boundary stone, as it were, of the kingdom of darkness and ancient night. H.

The language here used must designate metalliferous stones, veiled in the deepest night, and deposited in the darkest depths of the earth, but which yet the unwearied miner searches out. J.

† According to this division and mode of reading, the dwelling of the forgotten would be the kingdom of the dead, and at a greater depth than the deepest mines have reached. Streams break forth from the river of eternal oblivion beneath, and yet are overcome by the miners, pumped dry, and turned out of the way. Yet I confess the passage remains obscure to my own mind.

And whatever is costly his eye seeth.  
 He searcheth the floods in their deep fountain,  
 And that which is hid he bringeth to light.

But where shall man find wisdom ?  
 And where is the place of understanding ?  
 Man knoweth not the seat thereof,  
 It is not found in the land of the living.  
 The abyss crieth, it is not in me !  
 The sea respondeth, not in me !

It cannot be purchased for gold,  
 Nor silver weighed as the price thereof.  
 Gold from Ophir cannot equal its worth,  
 Neither the precious onyx and sapphire.

It is never ranked with gold and chrystal,  
 No precious jewel is ever exchanged for it.  
 Ramoth and Gabish are not to be named,  
 For the possession of wisdom is better than pearls.  
 The topaz of Ethiopia is not compared with it,  
 The most fine gold cannot equal it.\*

Where then shall man find wisdom ?  
 And where is the place of understanding ?  
 It is hidden from the eyes of the living,  
 Kept secret from the fowls of heaven.  
 Nothingness and death answer,  
 We have heard the rumour thereof from afar.

God marketh out the road to it,  
 He alone knoweth its abiding place.

\* All this variety of wealth indicates the Idumæan origin of the book of Job. The Idumæans at an early period had the trade by way of Ezion Geber and Elath on the Red Sea, which the Israelites first gained under Solomon. Hence their acquaintance with Ophir, Æthopia, and the costly articles here named. From the passages relating to mining, which occur in this book, doubts have been started in regard to its antiquity, but wholly without reason. So soon as gold and precious stones were dug from the mountains, mining existed, and there are proofs enough, that it existed very early. The passage of Job, in which it is said, "gold comes from the North," is wholly misunderstood, when applied to trade in gold. The trade of which Job speaks was wholly with the South by way of the Red Sea, and the parallelism of that passage speaks of the golden splendour, in which God appeared from the North, as was clearly shown in the previous dialogues.

has it been done in this form? Was not this belief among them a mere national faith, so narrow and exclusive, that it might rather be considered offensive and hostile, than friendly to the race. They were God's peculiar people, chosen and set apart even in their ancestors. No blessing comes upon any new offspring in the successive generations of their patriarchs, but a curse must at the same time fall upon a neighbouring race, even if it be that of a brother or a near kinsman. Noah is not content with blessing Shem, he must at the same moment pronounce a curse upon Ham. Isaac cannot receive a blessing, but Ishmael must be thrust out from his home and family; nor Jacob, without corresponding and injurious neglect of Esau. So it is throughout. Moses and Joshua slay the ancient and rightful inhabitants, in order to convert to the benefit of God's chosen people a country, which according to human laws did not belong to them. You know how much sarcasm and how many invectives are uttered respecting the history of this people, in which I have no participation, because they often give pain to innocent persons, who have no knowledge of the subject or of the times. Yet it is difficult to controvert the leading idea, that this people, even from their origin, cherished narrow, exclusive, and arrogant views, which have impressed themselves also upon their poetry, and have spoiled the best part of it by a mixture of denunciations and hatred of other nations. And yet I can discover in the history of their patriarchs no appearance of extraordinary merit. What heroick deeds have they to exhibit, which would not be far outdone by the records of other nations? What great names, on which the glory of their race can be even tolerably well sustained? Can they appeal to Noah, an example of drunkenness; to Abraham, who disowned his wife in Egypt; to the timid Isaac; to Jacob, who so cunningly overreached his father, his brother, his father-in-law, and the whole world; to the incestuous Judah; the revengeful Simeon and Levi; or finally to Moses, who with

hard-hearted insensibility cut off whole nations ? And could such men be the founders of a nation chosen of God, of God's peculiar people ? In this people all the tribes of the earth are to be blessed ; and yet they imprecate curses upon all nations, though they know only their names, and often, in the songs of their prophets, weakly and with hostile feelings rejoice, that their future king will at last reduce them all to subjection. They have no representation more delightful to them, than that of their king coming from Mount Seir, as a treader of the wine-press, and with garments dyed in the blood of a kindred people. The whole earth must be laid waste, in order that their poor and barren land, their race despised by all nations, may bear rule alone. Answer me now, my friend, in regard to these objections, but, I beg of you, not mystically and theologically ; of such vindications I have read enough and more than enough. Why did not Abraham continue where he was ? Why must the unoffending Canaan pay the forfeit of his father's indiscretion or villainy ? or the unfortunate Esau suffer, because his mother cooked a kid, before he could prepare his wild venison ? And yet on these old wives' tales depends all the peculiar distinction of this people, their ancestral honour, and the lofty triumph of their prophecies and Psalms. The most beautiful poetry in the world becomes poor and contemptible, when it grounds itself with an exclusive and hostile feeling on traditions of this sort.

**EUTHYPHRON.** You have overwhelmed me, my friend, with objections, which I have reason to be thankful, do not affect my own race. I am no Hebrew, and have no interest in this people, as a people. They were not certainly chosen for their own worthiness, and no one has exposed their weakness and shame with more force, than their own prophets. I willingly grant you, that they greatly misapprehended the purpose of their election and peculiar privileges, and sadly profaned with superstition and idolatry, with stupid pride, obsequious vanity, and other vices, that Palladium, for which



they assumed far too much credit to themselves,—their faith in Jehovah, as the only and the true God. But we are not here called upon, as it seems to me, to vindicate the nation, as a nation, much less their national prejudices and vices, but the purpose of God in the events of their history, and the flowers of that poetick growth, which, in the results of its development has actually, (for this is matter of fact and no theological mysticism), produced fruits for the benefit of so many other nations. And since we are conversing about a shepherd race, let us recline under this spreading tree! We will imagine it to be Abraham's terebinth tree at Mamre, and even speak in the tones of calm contemplation, like the patriarchal shepherds; not with the artful wit of Voltaire, nor with the dark malignity of Bolingbroke and Morgan. The tranquillity of nature around us awakens peaceful emotions and we will endeavour to keep at peace with these forms of ancient simplicity.

First, then, of Noah. You call the conduct of Ham towards him indiscretion or villainy. Let it be the one or the other, you must give the father permission to punish it.

A. To punish it?

E. That is the sense of it; and I know not why, when we fall upon a word that is misunderstood, we should not put an intelligible one in the place of it. The father was a king in his own family, and had sovereign power even over the life of his sons. Noah was the second Adam, the patriarch of a new world. He must appear to his family almost in the character of a God; for it was only through him and for his sake, that they had been delivered from the general judgment. Now no greater offence could have been committed against him, than Ham, who was himself a man of mature years, and had sons, committed in this case. You know with what rigour the laws of filial reverence and modesty in domestick intercourse are guarded in the East, and in a period so early were rightfully regarded as sacred. Those members which Ham

created with mockery, were held sacred. He offended his brothers, and was guilty, if you will allow the expression, of violating the injured majesty of his father. His transgression was domestick, and so was the punishment. He had insulted the patriarch of the race, and punishment was inflicted upon the son and his offspring. In short, he was deprived of the rights pertaining to a son, and was degraded to the condition of a family servant among his brethren.

A. Is that the import of the words ?

E. Look and see.

Cursed be Canaan ;

Let him be a servant of servants to his brethren.

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem,

And let Canaan be his servant.

Let the Elohim enlarge Japheth,

Let him dwell in the tents of Shem,

And let Canaan be his servant.

Whether Canaan participated in his father's offence or not, he naturally participated in the punishment ; for when the father was deprived of his filial rights, his children must suffer with him. So it is now in regard to all family misfortunes, and it seems to me, that Noah inflicted a punishment, which, according to the then prevailing customs and mode of thinking, if not light, was yet not unjust ; ignominy with ignominy, scorn with scorn, insult with insult.

A. But why was Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, alone named ? for Ham had older sons. A wishful glance at the land of Canaan seems to have had its influence here.

E. If it were so, then it was an application merely of the tradition to a case, in which the Israelites were more particularly concerned. You know, that the national rights of ancient nations depended on such traditions, and the relations of the tribes in their origin to each other. In the East, in India, I might say, indeed among all small tribes, which remain attached to their original stock, the same is true, even at the present day. Yet I believe, that, as to the fact, Ca-

naan, the youngest son, participated in the transgression, and perhaps the peculiar expression, "Noah knew what his younger son had done unto him," points to this. The narrative is too concise to decide this point; and, if it did, the privilege of indulging misanthropy, and of conquering the Canaanites, wherever found, could not be given by this sort of prophetick narrative. Jacob imprecated curses upon his two sons, Simeon and Levi, even on his death-bed, because they had revenged the deepest stain upon the honour of his house with the blood of a Canaanitish family.

A. And yet Joshua destroyed them without mercy.

E. We will speak of that hereafter; let us confine ourselves for the present to the history of the patriarchs. You called Noah a drunkard. I have no doubt you will retract the expression, when you read the narrative in its connexion. It was the first experiment in the cultivation of an unknown plant, which might have resulted in the same way to Bacchus himself.

A. Forget the word, and let it pass. Why did not Abraham remain where he was, in his own country? His leaving it was the occasion of the subsequent mischief.

E. Because he was a Nomade, and all Nomades live a wandering life. They are wanderers still, even to the present day, though three thousand years, it may be presumed, must have made a considerable difference in the populousness of these countries. Besides, it was not he that first became a wanderer; his father was a Nomade before him, and his father's father. The brothers of Peleg had wandered with their tribes even down to Arabia, and the brothers of Abraham, and his brothers' sons, had planted the best countries of the neighbouring region, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Chaldæa. In regard to physical advantages, Abraham obtained by no means the best country, and God promised on this account to make his portion good with blessings of a different kind. And finally, in the land of Canaan there was no collision of

interests between Abraham and any one there. He moved about here and there, as a godlike prince, showed his magnanimity to Lot, and towards the kings whom he delivered from their enemies, and his integrity of character to the Canaanites, of whom he purchased a burying place. This they offered him as a gift, but he would not receive it without paying its price ; and you are aware what they allowed him along with it. Obviously, the occupation in common with them of their country for himself and his latest posterity. Where the fathers slept, there must the children sleep also. This was the first principle of national rights among all ancient nations. " We will meet you at the graves of our fathers," was the common expression in maintaining their rights against the encroachment of their enemies. In truth—one who would convict Abraham of misanthropy, of oppression, of self-seeking, and narrowness of soul, must discover some new history of his life.

A. Yet he dissembled, and disowned his wife in Egypt.

E. It was not however for him, but for the politick Egyptians to be ashamed, that a stranger, though even upon half groundless apprehensions, must do what he did ; and the result proved that the fear was not wholly groundless. Besides, we must not regard a patriarchal shepherd, as a gallant lover, or a knight by profession, who is ready to die a thousand deaths for his mistress. Abraham committed an error ; and I am not displeased, that in the history of a great man the weakness of being needlessly cautious stands recorded. In the mean time, the narrative no where says what vulgar slanderers, in their ignorance of the ancient customs of the East, represent. We will overlook, then, the mistake of a herdsman, who knew not how to conduct himself at court, and observe with what uprightness, dignity, benevolence, and simplicity, he conducted in his tent, his own shepherd's lodge. Can any thing be more noble, than the mode of his intercession for Sodom, his declaring himself to the

king of Salem respecting the spoils, and to Lot? Can any thing be more beautifully pastoral in its character, than his reception of the angels, and entertainment of them beneath the tree! In reading it, one is transported into the very region, and breathes the true spirit, of pastoral innocence, and expects, as it were, angels to present themselves before his own hospitable and simple tent. Finally, his intercourse with God himself, how full of interest and instruction! With what calm and unquestioning faith, when his divine friend required it, did he offer up the dearest object which he possessed, that on which all his hopes were suspended, which he had waited and longed for, as the highest prize of his life! Pardon me, my friend, for saying, that I scarcely know any thing to be compared with this calm, heroick faith, this artless confidence between a simple herdsman and—the God of heaven. The poetry of no other people has any thing to equal it. The poetry of other nations represents men as holding intercourse with false Gods, with Genii, and departed heroes, but not with the true and only God of heaven and earth, and in a way so calm and confiding. The stranger has no other friend but God, who sent him a pilgrim into this land of strangers; but him he holds fast as the best of all friends. What delicate passages occur in the conversation and intercourse of God with him, where he comforts and directs him, encourages him in regard to the future, gives him now a token of his covenant and friendship, now a new name, then memorial signs, and requires of him, now this, and now that return of affectionate confidence.

“Fear thou not Abram,  
 I am thy shield thy exceeding great reward.”  
 And he brought him forth abroad, and said,  
 “Look towards heaven, and tell the stars.  
 Art thou able to number them?”  
 And he said “so shall thy seed be.”  
 And he had faith in Jehovah,  
 And he counted his faith to him  
 For righteousness.

So long as artless simplicity affects the human heart, so long will the beauty of such passages be felt. So also, when God makes a covenant with Abraham, and condescends in the form of a column of smoke to pass through between the separated parts of the offering, and like a mere mortal to confirm his covenant by an oath. It was a covenant of friendship for Abraham and his posterity, which was to make him an example of the severest virtue, and his race distinguished for the same characteristick ; which was to set them apart for no other end but to be the tribe, in which all the tribes of the earth should be blessed. Do you not discover in this purpose of God, this ideal of a national cultivation, something great and sublime ? And where do you find it, considered merely as a preconceived purpose, as an ideal, among all the other nations of the earth ? Their noblest purposes were nothing higher, than the attainment of political cultivation for themselves, or of power and dominion over other nations.

A. But where then does the corresponding result show itself among this people ?

E. In the patriarch of the race at least. He stands forth as a sort of type and symbol of the covenant. He must leave his paternal home for a dwelling with strangers, and be content with a pilgrimage in a foreign and uninviting country. Long he waited for the promise, and saw it not. When at last he received an earnest of it in Isaac, he was required to offer up even him as a sacrifice. You see that, in its symbolical character, it is all as it should be in its relation to God's covenant people. Friendship with God must be the purpose of their election, but a self-denying, self-sacrificing friendship. The virtue, to which Abraham was educated, was a retiring, unpublished, and silent virtue, but on that account the more noble and beautiful. It is trust in God even in the greatest difficulties, and in regard to the ultimate future, i. e. faith. A hero in faith, that is, in simple unaf-

fect greatness of soul, in an intimate communion of the heart with the most pure and holy Being—this was Abraham. Such must his people be—and a hero of this sort is a higher development of the human spirit, than a hero with his fist, or the weapons of war, or even with political craft and intrigue.

A. So the poetry of this people, then, should be called the poetry of the covenant.

E. You have the right name, only we must not interpret it in a theosophick and mystical sense. It should be understood of a poetry expressive of friendship between man and his Maker; the child-like poetry, in which feeble men express their conceptions, and feelings in regard to that Supreme Being, who holds to them the relation of a father; which reminds them of his covenant, directs them to his given word, and strengthens their hearts by recounting the doings of the Most High. Hence the influence of this poetry upon all simple and child-like hearts, upon all pure heroick souls, especially in times of distress, and in prayer, under sickness and suffering. It forms a bond of connexion between men and (not idols, not Genii, not departed heroes, but) God, the father of men, and the controller of their destiny. How delightful, in this view of it, is the simple story of the patriarchs! Their outward condition and worldly fortunes were not splendid. Few and evil, says the last of them, have the years of my life been. They are on a pilgrimage, without rest or an abiding place, and misfortunes are not wanting to their families. But God is always near them; his angels accompany them, the Elohim are round about them, and the land is made sacred, as it were, by their footsteps. And in their dwellings were preserved the purity of ancient manners, faith in God, child-like simplicity and devotion, as a sacred treasure transmitted from the primeval world. In this respect, too, they were for the poetry of later times the ground of much beautiful and eloquent imagery.

Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness,\*  
 Ye that continue faithful to Jehovah.  
 Look unto the rock, whence ye are hewn,†  
 Look to the pit, whence ye are digged.  
 Look unto Abraham, your father,  
 And unto Sarah, that bare you.  
 For I called him the one alone,‡  
 And blessed him, and increased him.  
 So now will Jehovah comfort Zion,  
 Will comfort all her waste places,  
 Will make her wilderness like Eden,  
 Her desert like the garden of Jehovah.  
 Joy and gladness shall dwell in them,  
 Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

Observe here the title of honour given to Abraham—the one

\* Isa. li. 1—3.

† Without doubt, reference is had to this passage in Matt. iii. 9. The Israelites trusted in the circumstance of their being children of Abraham; and the prophet of the wilderness says, God can from these stones hew out children to Abraham. At least the figure was known from the expression of Isaiah.

‡ From this may be explained the obscure passage, Malachi ii. 14. 15. which condemns and opposes the practice of putting away one's wife.

The Lord is witness between thee  
 And the wife of thy youth,  
 Whom thou despisest, and rejectest;  
 And yet she is thy companion,  
 And the wife of thy covenant.  
 So did not the alone one,  
 Though he longed for children.  
 What then did the one?  
 He hoped for them from God.

A peculiar emphasis is given here to the expression, one alone, which was already understood from Isaiah, as a name of distinction for Abraham. He was the alone one, from whom the race could and must be derived. He was old, Sarah was advanced in years, and yet he did not repudiate her, nor indulge in anger against her.

So watch ye also over your eager desires,  
 And do not injustice to the wives of your youth.



alone ! a rock, which gives itself up to God, and out of which God hews his chosen people—what various applications may be made of it for the confirmation of his people's faith.

Look down from heaven, thy holy habitation,  
Look from the seat of thy glory and majesty.  
Where is thy zeal ? where is thy strength ?  
Thy moving, thy compassionate heart  
Is now hardened against us !

And yet thou art our father,  
Though Abraham be ignorant of us,  
And Israel acknowledge us not ;  
Thou Lord art our father, our redeemer,  
That is thy name from everlasting.

And wherefore hast thou suffered us  
To wander so far from thy ways ?  
Why hath our heart hardened itself,  
Oh Jehovah ! from thy fear ?  
O ! turn thee again to thy servants ;  
We are thine inheritance forever.

Thus God has taken upon himself the paternal rights of Abraham, who has transferred his children to his care, in the interchange of friendly and heartfelt confidence.

A. All very fair and good ; but what say you, my friend, to the faults of the patriarchs ?

E. They are human failings, and the very fact, that they are recounted, that in their history nothing is kept back and concealed, makes their shepherd tale, considered as a pastoral narrative merely, invaluable. The timid Isaac, the crafty Jacob, stand forth in their doings ; but you will not deny, that the craftiness of the latter was always recompensed with evil ; and in his old age, like Ulysses, he exhibited among these patriarchal herdsmen a character well tried and approved. His history is an instructive mirror of the human heart,\* and God himself wiped away from Jacob, arrived at mature age,

\* Sterne has an instructive, though too witty sermon on the fortunes of Jacob, which exhibits his experience of the law of retribution.

those stains, which in his youth were associated with his name. "Thou shalt no more be called Jacob, (a supplanter), but Israel, a hero of God, shall thy name be ;" a title of distinction which the poetry of this people also may deservedly bear. Not physical strength is celebrated in it, but divine heroism, prayer, and faith.

A. It has not acquired this title however, as Jacob did his, by a conflict in a dream.

E. In a dream ? I perceive you use an expression, not new indeed, but one which—often as it is repeated—contradicts the narrative when taken in its connexion. Jacob had divided the encampment and the tents, from fear of a nocturnal assault from his brother. He then placed himself at a distance from the tents, not indeed that he might sleep, but expressly not to sleep.

A. And what did he then ?

E. What preceded we may very easily infer from the circumstances.\* He prayed, he wrestled with God in prayer ; and there must be some visible symbol, that his heroick faith prevailed with God. Elohim appeared, not Jehovah ; and you know that in the history of Jacob, as well as in the earlier traditions, the word is used distinctively. The host of God revealed themselves to Jacob, as two wings of an army encamped, and conceptions of angels occupied also his thoughts. And lo ! there appeared to him a hero, the divine form of a heavenly warrior, and wrestled with Jacob. It appeared and vanished with the obscure shadows of the dawn ; in short, read the beautiful night vision itself, which, even in the tone and colouring of the narrative, seems floating amid the dreamy and troubled shadows of the night.†

And Jacob stayed alone by night,  
Then wrestled one with him, till break of day,  
And yet prevailed not over him.

\* Gen. xxxii. 10—12.

† Gen. xxxii. 24.

And when he saw that he prevailed not,  
 He touched his hip upon the joint.  
 The joint of Jacob's hip was wrenched,  
 While thus he wrestled with him.  
 The man said, "now let me go,  
 For morning breaketh."  
 He said, "I will not let thee go, until thou bless me."  
 Then said the man, "what is thy name?"  
 He answered him, "my name is Jacob."  
 He said, "thou shalt no more be called Jacob,  
 Hero of God shall be thy name.  
 With Gods and men hast thou conflicted bravely,  
 And hast prevailed."  
 And Jacob asked, and said,  
 "Tell me also thy name."  
 He said, "why dost thou ask my name?"  
 And then he blessed him there.  
 And Jacob called the place Peniel: for, he said,  
 "I saw here face to face the Elohim  
 And yet my life is saved."  
 Then rose the sun, as he went forth from Peniel,  
 And Jacob halted on his hip.

E. Is there a word here about a dream? Is it not all as plain historical narrative, as the mode of Jacob's dividing the sheep? Nay, consider what honour could have been attached to the name, which was given to the patriarch and to the whole race. The dreamer had wrenched his hip in his sleep, and therefore he was called Israel, a godlike hero, his whole race inherited the name for the same reason, and Jehovah himself came down once and again in order to fasten upon him the really ironical and reproachful title of a hero in his dreams. All this too is recounted in a family tradition. Do you not feel the absurdity of this representation in every particular?

A. It is so, I confess. And the name, Elohim, as you have explained it in a former conversation, frees me from all doubt. A conflict with Gods, with spirits, with heroick forms, was nothing strange or unheard of in ancient times;

nav, according to the representations of the poets, it was commonly considered as the highest proof of heroick power in man. In Homer, gods and men are in continual conflict ; and Ossian's Fingal also on one occasion by night contended with a giant spirit. In the East conceptions of the kind must have been common.

E. According to the representations both of their poetry and history, their most ancient heroes must often have conflicted in this manner with spiritual beings and giants. But let us not confound this artless narrative with such fables and monstrous exaggerations, as belong to the later traditions. How tranquil and how correspondent to the shepherd's character is every thing in this narrative ! The being, with whom Jacob wrestled, is not named, does not name himself, and leaves it to be inferred, who he was, from the name alone which he gave to Jacob. Jacob expresses no triumph, relates the story to no one, and wonders like a simple herdsman, how he could have contended face to face with the Elohim, and have escaped with his life.—But the finest part of the whole is its inward sense, by which the patriarch was taught how needless it was for him to stand in fear of Esau, when he had prevailed with Jehovah in prayer, and with the Elohim by the power of his arm. So the prophet\* explains it, and the figurative sense is plain from the place, the time, and the connexion of the narrative.

A. And thus the vision in this case expressed to the man in his alarm, what, on a former occasion, the vision of a ladder reaching to heaven expressed to the timid youth.

E. The same thing ; only in a manner adapted to the character of a man. He must not dream, but earn for himself the name of a hero. The parallel, which you have adduced, is however, a very significant one. The vision shows the child-like conceptions, which the shepherd youth entertained of God and the angels, and we may regard the dream

\* Hos. xii. 4. 5.

as a true pastoral representation. Will you read it? The evening is gradually approaching, and the sun is going down in tranquillity and beauty.

A.

He reached a place and spent the night,  
For the sun was now already set.  
Then he took a stone from off the place,  
And laid it for his pillow,  
And laid him down to sleep.  
And there he dreamed, and lo ! a ladder stood  
Extended high above the earth,  
Whose top reached up to heaven,  
And messengers of God went up and down upon it.  
And lo ! Jehovah stood above and said,  
I am Jehovah the God of thy fathers."

\* \* \* \* \*

And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said,  
Surely, Jehovah is in this place,  
And yet I knew it not !" And he was sore afraid, and said,  
" How dreadful is this place,  
This is none other but the house of God !  
Here is the gate of heaven."

And Jacob took the stone, at break of day,  
And set it for a monument,  
And poured upon it oil, and called the place Bethel.  
And Jacob vowed a vow, and said,  
" If God henceforth be with me,  
And guard me in the way I go,  
And give me food and raiment,  
That I return and see my father's house in peace ;  
Then shall Jehovah be my God,  
And this, which I have placed a monument,  
Shall be the house of God !"

E. You see here the artless conceptions of the youthful herdsman. He knew not, that his father's God would be found except in his father's house. He was terrified, that he had slept without knowing it, upon holy ground, as it were, in the outer court of God's own dwelling place. He had seen

in his dream its doors open<sup>\*</sup> and by a vow proffered to the place—a house of God, because God in so peculiar a manner inhabited it. If angels here ascended and descended upon a ladder, which reached to heaven, it would be easy to suppose, that one of them, like the Elohim in strength and dignity, might wrestle with Jacob. Have you any thing further to object to these pastoral narratives ?

A. The gross partiality of the patriarchs in blessing their sons, since, according to the belief of the race, the whole fortune of their posterity depended on this last prophetick declaration.

E. How say you ? Did this depend on the will of the father ? Was not Isaac in fact partial to Esau ? and would not Abraham have contented himself with Ishmael ? How much pain did it cost Jacob, that he must pass by his three oldest sons ! and indeed was one of those whom we have named omitted, so far as regarded temporal blessings ? Esau went to meet Jacob as a prince ; while Jacob was and continued to be a stranger and dweller in tents. Ishmael dwelt in his deserts like the wild animal, with which he is compared, free and joyous. His posterity boast of their country, as one given them by the special favour of God, in which they follow their vocation, and wish for nothing better. The prophecy,

He shall be a fugitive\* from man,  
His hand shall be opposed to all,  
And all men's hands opposed to him.  
He dwells before the face of all his brethren,

is fulfilled in the Ishmaelites, and in its strict and proper sense. Let us read the touching and truly interesting story of the exiled Hagar, wandering in the desert. You will perceive in this, that the tone and style of the narrative in these traditions has nothing of misanthropy or of hard-hearted insensibility.

\* A wild ass. Gen. xvi. 12.

The water in the bottle was exhausted,  
 And Hagar cast the child beneath a tree,  
 And went away and sat with looks averted,  
 The distance of a bow-shot off.  
 For Hagar said, "I may not see  
 The child while dying." Thus she sat,  
 And lifted up her voice and wept.  
 Then God the crying child regarded,  
 And from the heavens his angel called,  
 "What aileth thee, Hagar, fear not,  
 For God hath heard the voice of the child,  
 Where he is lying.—  
 Arise; and lift him up,  
 And hold him with thine hand,  
 For I will make him, yet a mighty nation."  
 Then God the eyes of Hagar opened,  
 And she beheld a well of water,  
 And went and filled her bottle with it,  
 And gave the child to drink.  
 And God was with him, and he grew,  
 And was a dweller in the desert,  
 And he became an archer.

In the same affecting manner is related the history of the sorrowful Esau, when he failed of obtaining the blessing, which had fallen to Jacob. Let us compare the terms of the blessings bestowed upon both, in order to observe the difference.

THE BLESSING BESTOWED BY ISAAC UPON ESAU.

In the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling,  
 And enriched with the dews of heaven above.  
 By thy sword shall thy life be sustained,  
 And thy brother shalt thou serve.  
 Yet the time shall arrive for thee to rule,  
 And his yoke shalt thou break from off thy neck.

ISAAC'S PROPHETICK BLESSING UPON JACOB.

"Come near now, and kiss me my son."  
 And Jacob came near, and kissed him.

Then smelled he the ~~smell~~ of his raiment,  
 And blessed him, and said,  
 "Behold I smell my son, as the smell of a field,  
 A field, which God hath blessed.  
 God give thee, therefore, of the dew of heaven,  
 The fatness of earth, and plenty of corn and wine.  
 Let the people serve thee,  
 And the nations bow down to thee,  
 Be thou ruler over thy brethren,  
 And let thy mother's sons be subject to thee.  
 Cursed be every one that curseth thee,  
 And blessed be he, that blesseth thee."

Do you not perceive in both the voice of destiny uttered even against the will of the father? Under the form of Esau the other is fated to receive the blessing, and the father to utter for him what he intended to utter against him. All your doubts and objections against these exclusive declarations fall to the ground, when you consider, that they were not temporal blessings, to which the chosen son was destined. His posterity were to guard the name and worship of Jehovah, and, from the time of Moses onward, to bear the yoke of the law—a blessing, from which most nations would gladly have been relieved.

A. There was, however, it seems, some special regard to Canaan!

E. And what was there so important in this small country? The race must have a habitation in some part of the world. Their poetry has indeed greatly extolled this little corner of the earth, and almost every mountain, brook, and valley, is celebrated by its praises; but observe it is always praised, as the land favoured of God, as the land of promise, and in no other way. Its distinctive name and character were derived from the promises concerning it, for it was called the promised land, and you will find, that the poetry connected with Canaan treats every thing in this point of view—its relation to God and the patriarchs. Zion, Lebanon,



Carmel, are mountains of God; the streams, by which memorable deeds were performed, are the rivers of God; the land is the holy land, marked by the footsteps of God and the fathers, and the pledge of their being the chosen people. In the history of other nations there are indications, that they designated here and there a small piece of their soil, as made sacred by the presence of their God; but I know no people whose poetry like theirs has made the poverty of their country exhibit the fulness of God, and consecrated its narrow limits as a theatre for displaying the Majesty of Jehovah. Even now the great mass of this dispersed race delude themselves with hopes drawn from this source, because the traditions of the race, its laws, its poetry, every thing has relation to the promised land, and, as it were, without a country to rest upon, the tree of their hopes still flourishes and waves in the air above.

A. Uninteresting enough, too, for us, since we are not of that country, and cannot read the denunciations of their prophets against other countries with the enthusiasm, with which they listened to them. All their golden dreams of the glory of this narrow region, under a king so long waited for and still to be waited for, seem to us mere dreams of folly; and a greater part of their poetry is to us equally empty and unmeaning.

E. We shall speak of that in treating of the prophets. *Surgamus, solent esse graves sedentibus umbræ.* It would give me great pleasure, if I had removed some of your doubts in regard to the early history of this people, and from these traditions of the race placed in a clearer light the characteristic traits of its poetry. It is in a word the poetry of herdsmen; a poetry breathing the spirit of their covenant relation, that is, of the family bond, by which they were united, and the relation of friendship, in which the patriarch of the race stood to God; in a word it is the poetry of Canaan as the land of promise. Read it in this spirit, and it will no

longer be unmeaning. But if you would see another ideal of an Oriental hero, distinguished for wisdom, happiness, and quiet but superior virtue, let it be Job. I will point out to you the passages, which place his character in the fairest light. Would that all christian emirs thought, believed, and lived, as well as he did.

## A P P E N D I X .

### I. PICTURE OF THE PROSPERITY, THE ACTIVITY, AND DIGNITY OF AN ORIENTAL PRINCE.\*

Oh that I were as in the ancient times,  
 The days when God preserved me !  
 His light shone clear upon my head,†  
 And by his light I walked through darkness.  
 As once I was in the days of my youth,  
 When God took counsel with me, in my tent,  
 When the Almighty yet was with me,  
 And round about me stood my slaves.  
 And where I went, a stream of milk flowed on,  
 The rock poured out for me rivers of oil.  
 When from my house I went to the assembly  
 And spread my carpet in the place of meeting,  
 The young men saw me and concealed themselves,  
 The aged rose up, and continued standing,  
 Princes refrained from talking,  
 And laid their hands upon their mouths ;  
 The voice of counsellors was silent ;  
 He whose ear heard me, counted me blessed,  
 And he whose eye saw me, bore witness to me,  
 Because I delivered the poor that cried,  
 The fatherless that had none to help him.  
 He that was ready to perish blessed me,  
 And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy,

\* Job. xxix.

† A lamp was hung in the tent of an Oriental. The glory of his protecting God is here represented as taking its place. God gave him light in darkness ; sat in council with him in his tent, and whatever he undertook prospered.

I put on righteousness and it clothed me,  
 My judgment was as a robe and a diadem.  
 I was eyes to the blind,  
 And feet was I to the lame,  
 I was a father to the poor,  
 And searched out the cause of strangers.  
 I brake the jaws of the wicked,  
 And plucked the spoil from his teeth.

Then I said, I shall perish with my nest,\*  
 I shall multiply my days as the phoenix.  
 My root shall be nourished by the waters,  
 The dew lay all night upon my branches.  
 My strength in me shall be refreshed,  
 My bow renewed in my hand.

Men gave ear to me and waited,  
 They kept silence at my counsel.  
 After my words they spake not again,  
 For my speech dropped upon them as the dew.

They waited for my words as for the rain,  
 And opened their mouths as for the latter rain.  
 If I laughed at them they were not offended,  
 And no one saddened the joy of my countenance.

I chose for them and sat as chief ;  
 I dwelt as a king in the midst of my army,  
 As a comforter among the mourners.

## 2. PICTURE OF MAGNANIMITY AND UNSHAKEN HOPE IN ADVERSITY.

[After all the messages communicating his misfortunes, his losses of property and children, were brought to Job in rapid succession, the book proceeds with a calm tone, as follows.]

Then Job stood up,  
 And rent his mantle,  
 And shaved his head,†

\* The Phoenix is obviously intended here ; only through a double sense of the word, the figure of the bird is immediately changed for that of the palm-tree, an evidence, that an analogy between the two was noticed and pointed out in the East.

† Not a token of impatience in the East, but of grief.

And cast himself upon the earth,  
 And worshipped, and said,  
 "Naked came I from my mothers womb,  
 And naked shall I return thither.\*  
 Jehovah hath given,  
 Jehovah hath taken away,  
 Blessed be the Majesty of Jehovah."

[When his friends pressed him with severity, and threatened him with yet severer judgments from God on account of secret crimes, when the members of his household and his relatives deserted, disowned, and contemned him, he uttered his feelings in the affecting language, which follows.]

All my inward friends abhorred me ;  
 They whom I loved are turned against me ;  
 My bone cleaveth to my skin and my flesh,  
 And scarcely the skin in my teeth,  
 Have I brought away as a spoil.†  
 Have pity, have pity upon me, my friends,  
 For the hand of God is heavy upon me.  
 Why do ye persecute me, as God hath done ?  
 And are not satisfied with my flesh.  
 Oh that my words were now written,  
 That they were printed in a book !  
 That they were written in iron and lead,  
 And graven in the rock forever !  
 " I know that my avenger liveth,||

\* The womb of the mother and of the earth are often connected in this way in the East.

† Job. xix. 19.

‡ The figure is taken from the prey, which wild beasts carry away in their teeth ; his skin is his poor and wretched body, which alone he had escaped with, (not the skin upon his teeth). His friends are represented as carnivorous animals, which gnaw upon his skin, upon the poor remnant of his life.

|| These words in their connexion are so clear, that it is surprising they should have been so often mistaken. His friends had forsaken him, he had yet one friend, one relative, who would be his avenger, (this was the duty of the best friend and nearest relative) and this friend, as the sequel shows, is God. He shall stand upon the arena, and draw the sword in his behalf, the sword of the avenger and the judge. He shall

At last shall he step forth upon the scene.  
 Though they tear and devour this my skin,  
 Yet in my living body shall I see God.  
 I shall see him, as my deliverer,  
 Mine eye shall behold him, as mine,  
 For whom so long my heart fainted."

There shall ye then say,  
 Wherefore did we persecute him?  
 Then shall the root of my cause  
 Be at length discovered.  
 Be afraid for his glittering sword,  
 It is a sword of wrath, that revengeth injustice,  
 That will show you, there is a judgment.

### 3. MORAL SENTIMENTS OF AN IDUMÆAN PRINCE.\*

I have made a covenant with my eyes,  
 Why then should I look upon a maiden?  
 What portion should I then have in God?  
 What inheritance with God from on high?

Doth not destruction follow the wicked?  
 And open shame the workers of iniquity?  
 Therefore I thought, he seeth my way,  
 He counteth over all my steps.

Did I ever tread in the path of the hypocrite?  
 Or my foot hasten after deception?  
 (Let me be weighed in an even balance,  
 And God will then see my integrity.)  
 Did my steps ever turn from the way?  
 Or my heart steal after my eyes?  
 Or any blot cleave to my hand?  
 Then may I sow and another eat,  
 And what I have planted another root up.

be for him, and not for his friends. Job's heart recognises him as his, (his friend, his kinsman) since on earth all had forsaken him. Then will the root of his cause, his rectitude, be found out. I know nothing surpassing this firm and noble confidence, which moreover, though not entirely in Job's sense, was fully justified. I could wish, that men would agree in this interpretation, and deal no more in subtilties in regard to this passage.

\* Job. xxxi.

If ever my heart went after a woman,  
 And I laid wait at the door of my friend,  
 Then let my wife be the slave of a stranger,  
 Let her be dishonoured of others.  
 For that would be a crime even in human courts,  
 A fire that consumeth even to destruction,  
 And would burn out my prosperity to the roots.

Did I ever refuse his right to my servant,  
 And my maid, in a just cause with me?  
 What then should I do, if God stood up?  
 If he enquired of it what should I answer?  
 Did not he, that made me, make him also?  
 Were we not formed alike in the womb?

Have I withheld from the needy his desire,  
 And suffered the widow's eye to fail for food?  
 Have I eaten my morsel myself alone?  
 Nor let the fatherless partake thereof?  
 Who had grown up with me from a child,  
 That I should be to him as a father,  
 Whom I had guided from the womb.

Have I seen the wretched without clothing,  
 And the miserable go without a covering?  
 That his limbs have not blessed me,  
 And he been warmed with the fleece of my sheep.

Have I raised my hand against the orphan,  
 Because I saw partiality in the judgment seat?  
 Then let my shoulder fall from the joint,  
 Let the bone of my arm be broken.  
 I must now have trembled at God's justice,  
 And against his highness I could not endure.

If I have made riches my trust,  
 And said to gold, thou art my confidence,  
 And rejoiced in the greatness of my wealth,  
 Because my hand had gained so much.

If I beheld the sun when it shined,  
 Or the moon going forth in brightness,  
 And my heart was secretly enticed,  
 That my mouth hath kissed my hand for them,  
 That too were a crime for the judges,  
 For I should have abjured the God of heaven.

Have I rejoiced at the fall of my enemy,

And exulted when evil came upon him ?  
 No ! my tongue uttered no evil word,  
 Nor any imprecation against him,  
 When the men of my tent said,  
 " Oh that we had his flesh, it should satisfy us."\*

No stranger need lodge in the street,  
 I opened my doors to the wanderer.

Did I hide my faults like a mean man,  
 And cover up my crime in a corner ?  
 Because I was afraid of the multitude,  
 And the contempt of families terrified me,  
 And keep silence and go not in publick ?

Oh that I had a judge, who would hear me !  
 See my defence ; answer me, O ! my God !  
 Oh that one would write my cause in a book !  
 As a mantle would I lay it on my shoulders,  
 As a diadem would I bind it to my turban,  
 I would tell all my steps before him,  
 As a prince would I draw near unto him.

If my land cry out against me,  
 And the furrows thereof complain,  
 Because I enjoy the fruit without money,  
 And oppress the soul of the owner,  
 Let thistles grow instead of wheat,  
 And useless weeds instead of fruit.

\* That is, though he were the bitterest enemy of my house and all was in a state of open violence.

## DIALOGUE X.

Whether the language of the Hebrews was originally that of the Canaanites, and learned from them by the Hebrews. Improbability of this opinion, and facts at variance with it in the history and languages of the kindred descendants of Shem. That the Phenicians also were foreign settlers in Canaan. On what the right of the Shemites to this land, and to Asia generally, was grounded. How far religion was concerned in it. Difference between the Hamites and Shemites in their mode of life, religion, customs, and language. In what way these traditions among the Shemites were preserved. The history of Joseph and of the patriarchs back to Abraham. What we have before Abraham back to the flood. Relation of the members of this genealogical register. Whether Moses found it already existing. How it was formed into a genealogical chart. Whether we have in it a complete chart of the wanderings of the several races. View of what it must have been originally. Whether the account of the flood were handed down from the ark. Whether the deluge was universal. That the history of events before the deluge is connected with, and depends upon a few significant names. Examples of this. Whence these significant names were derived. Whether from prophecy, from translation, or a change of name. That the use of written characters perhaps originated in these significant names. How it arose. How the earliest traditions were probably preserved. Who was the discoverer of alphabetick writing. That only one alphabet exists, and that is the Shemitish. Whether the picture of creation was taken from Egyptian hieroglyphics. That the oldest traditions respecting Paradise came down from upper Asia. What in these traditions is fictitious. Whether the tower of Babel, the pillar of salt, Jacob's wrestling with God, are so. The song of Lamech, the meaning and the form of it. Of the style in other narratives. Difference of the traditions in regard to the use of the words Elohim and Jehovah. Appendix. The voice of antiquity.

**ALCIPHRON.** We are at length come to the most important and general questions, which are connected with this subject, and perhaps have given ourselves very useless trouble, in our previous conversations, in deducing the poetry of the Hebrews from their patriarchal traditions. For may not



these patriarchal traditions themselves have been of later origin? Did not the Hebrews first learn the language, in which they are written, from their hereditary enemies the Canaanites? If so, they must of course have been put together at a later period, or Moses himself devised them.

**EUTHYFRON.** Before the Hebrews came to Canaan then were they dumb, and had they no language?

**A.** Not so neither. Who knows what jargon they made use of? But the language in which these traditions are composed, is undeniably the language of Canaan, the Phenician language.

**E.** And from whom could the Phenicians have received it? Do you know of no dialects having a kindred relation to it? and were not these spoken by those, who were obviously Shemites? Syrian, Arabian, Chaldean, all were pure Shemitish races, having a kindred relation to Abraham and his fathers. The languages of their descendants, therefore, must also of necessity hold a corresponding relation. It is one of the fables of our own age, the meaning of which I could never yet comprehend, that the Hebrew language should be considered as originally and exclusively the language of the Canaanites. Even according to profane history, the Phenicians, after first dwelling upon the Red Sea, moved by degrees higher up, and planted themselves upon the coast of the Mediterranean. Now I will not undertake to decide, whether previously, before they pushed themselves among the pure Shemitish races, they did not speak a different language, just as the hypothesis is yet unproved, which has been hazarded in modern times, that the most ancient Egyptian language was kindred with the Hebrew. This last hypothesis seems to me to have little indeed to support it. The races of Ham and those descended from Shem seem entirely diverse from each other, as in manners, religion, modes of thinking, and political organization, so also in language. But let this be as it may, all the kindred races, as put down upon the genea-

logical table of Abraham, spoke dialects kindred to the Hebrew, and so his own race must have spoken a similar, and why not the proper Hebrew language, as it came downward from his ancestor Heber. All these traditions, and all the religious ideas in them, from the most ancient times, must have been originally conceived and expressed in a language having a kindred relation to the Arabick, Chaldee, and Syriack. This is proved by the book of Job, which so nearly resembles them. It is proved, too, by the radical forms of all the languages named. It is as strange and absurd to say, that the chapter giving an account of the creation is conceived after the style and manner of the Egyptians, as to say, that it was originally composed in the Mexican style. It is the same with the subsequent traditions. It was the Shemites, who brought down the name of Jehovah from the primeval world, and gave it a fixed place in their language, not the descendants of Ham and Mizraim. The alphabet, too, of the Phenicians was not invented by this people, for its names are Chaldee, not African. The Hebrew therefore is the original and proper language of the race of Eber, not a language begged, or borrowed of others; the Phenicians usurped it, as they did their country, and both probably for the sake of trade.

A. Why should they usurp their country? Was not the world open before them, and did the Shemites, this race of herdsmen, ever engage in the business of navigation? The coasts belonged to those who knew how to use them.

E. From the coasts, too, no one was disposed to drive them. In the mean time, from the manner in which the tribes were distinguished and divided off, it is plain, that they took certain directions in their wanderings, and in whatever direction it was, believed that certain regions and tracts of country were given them there. The tribes of Japheth went Northwards beyond the mountains, and roved at large with their tents, as the name itself implies. No descendants of

Shem followed them. Ham went towards the torrid countries of the South, and so to Africa, as partly the genealogical chart of Moses, and partly the name, indicates. If any tribes descended from him remained, as was the fact, here and there in Asia, or at a later date forced their way among the Shemites, they did so at the hazard of being expelled. The most ancient principle of national rights, which rests on such traditions of the origin and original prerogatives of tribes, could admit no other result. You see, then, why the Israelites believed themselves to have a well grounded right to the land of Canaan ; for that they firmly believed. This is plain from the writings of Moses. Their lawgiver held his opinions on this point with a zeal and decision which left no possibility of doubt, because not only all the traditions and the whole history of the origin of his race proceeded from and was built upon this, but the thought could never for a moment be admitted, that both races could inhabit and possess the land in common. The Shemites looked upon the posterity of Ham as a race of servants, with which even the unassuming and complaisant Abraham admitted throughout of no intimate connexion. Eliezer must go to Aram, (Mesopotamia) Jacob, too, must go to the distant Aram to secure a progeny for the race ; and a marriage with a woman of Canaan would have been regarded as derogatory to the honour of their race :—in short, as these races were diverse in religion, so also in the countries pertaining to them, in customs, and modes of thought ; and a brotherly intimacy between them was not to be thought of.

A. I am sorry for that, especially, that at so early a period religion should have been the cause of it. Quantum religio—says Lucretius rightly.

E. This too was the fault of the Hamites. From whatever cause it happened, we see the fact clearly, that from earliest times, among the tribes descended from Ham, the most gloomy superstition and the darkest idolatry have pre-

veiled. Tradition ascribes the origin of it to Ham himself. Whether this were so or not, among his posterity the obscure tendency to a dark or indeed horrible religion is undeniable. Think of the Egyptians, Phenicians, Carthaginians, the most cultivated nations belonging to this race ; how gloomy, and horrid were their religious rites ! and among other African tribes, the most miserable fetisch worship has come from the same source. Glance now for a moment at the language and religion of the Shemites (for, as to the ground forms, all these tribes from the Euphrates to the Red Sea have but one language), how pure and simple is their religion ! how entirely abstracted, and purified from all sensuousness, is their name of God ! how characteristick of humanity their notions of man and of his duties ! It is as if one had passed from the hut of the slave into the open and free tent of the children and the friends of God. For consider, it is these same tribes of Shem, the Arabians included, to whom the world is indebted for the doctrine of the unity of God, and the purest ideas of religion, and of creation, and who have maintained and diffused these with a zeal, which they have considered the highest honour of the race. The Hamites on the other hand went before them in that, which we now call culture ; they founded kingdoms, and systems of policy, prosecuted trade, and built cities. Most of the Shemites for a long period remained herdsmen, or if they entered into other modes of life, continued in a state of great simplicity ; and you see how favourable this circumstance was for the language and traditions of the primeval world, which they transmitted. They were not rendered artificially complex, nor over-borne and corrupted ; but in their simplicity and separation, like the tent, they remained in the tent a sacred legacy of patriarchal origin.

A. "There you come again upon a new difficulty. How is it possible, that such ancient traditions and narratives, among a people so little cultivated, and with their roving

manner of life, could be so long preserved, and transmitted even for thousands of years, in a manner to deserve the least credence? My doubts on that point, I confess, are not easily satisfied.

E. We will begin to unravel the knot at the end, viz. with the history of Joseph. This must of course, it seems to me, be preserved by the race, because it was founded upon, and served to explain, an important fact, the transplanting of the whole nation to Egypt. So long as an Israelite lived in Egypt, Joseph could not be forgotten, if not from thankfulness and love, yet from the trouble and oppression, which they suffered there. Thus this history might and must come down to Moses, even supposing that it was not previously written. Then too, it has such an air of authenticity, and is so full of Egypt!

A. That is true. It gives us authentick accounts of Egypt to a certain extent from a very ancient period, although it is conceived in a style very characteristick of the Israelites.

E. Because it was conceived and related by Israelites, and not by Egyptians, a sufficient pledge that such would be the case. With this, too, is inseparably connected the history of Jacob; and this, united with the history of Joseph, forms the most full and extended of all the traditions,\* partly, because the events related in it were more recent and nearer to the compiler, and partly, because through the medium of twelve sons and their posterity many particulars of it would naturally be preserved. There are distinct traditions in it undeniably, but not a two-fold tradition of the same event, as in more ancient traditions. Every thing, as far as the nature of the case would permit, is proved by circumstances of name, place, monuments, genealogical registers, and since those of neighbouring tribes are industriously and at large inserted among

\* Gen. xxvii. 50.

the registers of this,\* they serve to authenticate its history. These registers are the historical archives of the Orientals, and the historical traditions are the commentary. In the history of Jacob, too, the account of his wanderings, of his children, and his wives, is so in accordance with the life of a herdsmen, with the relations of a household, and the character of woman.

A. But beyond this, the antecedent traditions ?

E. Are more barren and scanty, as they must be. In the account of Abraham's sojourn in Egypt we recognize a two-fold tradition†. But here, too, every thing remains so true to the matter, so suited to time and place, that each tradition may generally be distinguished. Observe for example the reflection of the Arabian desert in the story of Ishmael‡. We see, too, from what has been remarked, why the accounts given of the blessings pronounced, and of the marriages, are so minute and full, since from these proceeds, as it were, the genealogical tree, on which afterwards every thing else is arranged.

A. But the reference to Canaan is every where observable.

E. It must be so, because Canaan was the end of all Abraham's sojournings, the sum of all the promises, and the theatre of all the events of the history. Places and families were the witnesses of particular events, and the long life of the patriarchs furnished a security for the preservation of the whole history. The race was shut up by itself, enjoyed a quiet mode of life, and the patriarchal traditions, together with the blessings pronounced, and the promises, formed as it were the soul, and the intellectual nourishment of it. A war-like people have their war-songs, a race of herdsmen their pastoral traditions.

A. And farther back, beyond the age of Abraham ?

E. The history vanishes even back to the deluge. A

\* Gen. xxxvi.

† Gen. xii. 20. 16. 21.

‡ Gen. xvi. 21.

naked genealogical table is all that we have\*. And observe even the poverty of the accounts for this period are a pledge of their truth. At this time the various races were making their migrations, and moving hither and thither. They must acquire consistence, and become established, before we could hear any thing more from them. Thus from Abraham to Noah, we have only a catalogue of names for the whole interval ; yet important names, because they are the genealogy of these Eastern nations.

A. If they were only authenticated, as we could wish !

E. You must authenticate them for yourself, and the relations of the parts and members, of the different races, and of the regions of country to which they belonged, furnish the means of doing so very satisfactorily. Of the progeny of Japheth the number given is small ; two generations only.† And the race is left there as a terra incognita, beyond the mountains. The posterity of Ham recorded are more numerous,‡ but the notices of them, which are definite, extend only to the region of country, which lay in the sphere of these traditions, between the Euphrates and Egypt ; the other names are attached to these only as a terra incognita. In regard to these, too, the more full and distinct notices are always connected with some definite occasion and saying, from which they proceed, as for example, the account of Nimrod and of the Canaanites.|| The register of the children of Shem shows this still more clearly. Heber's line is traced downward in both Peleg and Joktan,§ and their children, while of Aram only one generation is given,¶ and the other brothers are passed by and forgotten, because they were too far removed, and no notices were found of them, as of those more nearly related. The relation then of the members in this genealogical register furnishes evidence of its truth.

\* Gen. x. xi.

† Gen. <sup>11</sup>xii. 4.

‡ Gen. x. 6—14.

|| Gen. x. 9—12. 14—19. § Gen. x. 24—29. xi. 10—29. ¶ Gen. x. 23.

A. Do you not believe, then, that Moses drew this chart?

E. How could he? It is in fact, properly speaking, no chart; but, as it was before called, a register. If he had contrived it, it would have had no authority, and from the relation of the parts it is moreover plain, from what age and what region it was transmitted.

A. From what one then? I am anxious to know.

E. From about the time of Peleg, and the region, which he inhabited. In his time the tribes made their migrations; and as these migrations would be the subject of discourse, or it would be inquired, in how many distinct branches an original race had gone forth, this seems to have been the origin of these genealogical charts. Hence so little is said of the oldest sons of Japheth and Shem; and hence the traditions are chiefly confined to a small region between the Nile and the Euphrates or the Tigris. There were the enterprises of Nimrod, there wandered the generation of Peleg and Joktan, there Aram established himself, thence the Canaanites went forth, and this, too, gives its limits to this genealogical record.

A. And had Moses then nothing to do in the construction of it?

E. He made the genealogical record, which he found existing, as far as he could perhaps, into a geographical chart, i. e. he added to it an account of the place and direction, to which these ancient family divisions of the successive generations of the world had directed their course according to ancient tradition. Of Japheth he knew nothing more definite, and placed his descendants (v. 5.) by a very general designation in the obscure regions of the unexplored North. In regard to Nimrod, Ashur, and the Canaanites, (v. 8—12. 18. 19.) he added the geographical accounts, which he had received; but most respecting the Canaanites, because they were the nearest. Yet particular geographical notices occur of both earlier and later origin apparently, than the time of



**Moses:** Of the children of Joktan he gave but a brief notice,\* because, not to mention other descendants of Shem, these were unknown to him. The very poverty you perceive of this chart, and of these notices, is their security from being lost or interpolated.

**A.** It seems to me, too, that much useless trouble has been taken from considering this chapter, even in respect to names, a proper and complete chart of the emigrations, of ancient tribes, and seeking to trace out every name as a country or city.

**E.** So it appears to me, though labour bestowed in this way is praise-worthy, if it is not wholly in a wrong direction. But who can assure us, that some of these several races, that then went forth separately from each other, were not soon lost and absorbed or united with others, and who can tell whether all the names of families must be found in the countries which they inhabited? Even Moses, or perhaps an earlier patriarch, knew of the dwellings of Japheth, nay, of Shem and Joktan themselves, only the little, which occurs here, (v. 5. 22. 30.) and must we know more than they? Other divisions and cities again are described, with a particularity common in ancient descriptions of countries, as if a small tract were the whole world. (v. 10. 11. 19. 26—29.) How do we learn now, that accounts were preserved of the towns and cities of all these, that, for example, all the sons of Joktan, (v. 26—29) built for themselves cities in the region named. (v. 30.) The ground of all these errors is, that the chapter is taken as a proper map or chart, and as one made, by Moses; while it was originally a mere register of the different branches of families in their first separation from each other, and of their earliest offspring. The later glosses upon this too, which for us however are very ancient, only designate, somewhat vaguely for the most part, their possessions and

\* Gen. x. 30.

dwelling-places, and without affirming whether every name remained, and continued in the successive generations. In the mean time it is enough for our purpose, that the register proceeds, with chronological notices and ages of individuals, in a way distinct from the accounts of any other people, even back to the deluge.

A. And so you consider the journal of what took place in the ark as true and authentick ?

E. I know not otherwise how it attained its present form, and gave the measurement of the water in the daily increase and decrease of its height above the mountains. Every thing is noticed as in the actual and near view of the thing itself. Its tone, too, and the fragmentary character of these notices, before, during, and after the flood, are proof of its high antiquity.

A. And was the deluge as universal, as the author of this supposed ?

E. In relation to our purpose it would make no difference if we admit that it was not universal. It is sufficient, that this author held it to be so, and knew no country, that had escaped its overwhelming waters. Suppose that in the farthest East, high mountains and behind them whole kingdoms were saved from the flood ; he knew it not, and was not bound to know it. The giants, his persecutors, and with them all that lived in South Eastern Asia must perish, while he took with him his household and a stock of animals to a more Western region, from which through him the earth would now begin again to be peopled. If there were a people in the extreme-East saved from the deluge we shall in due time find it out.

A. But how ? and by what means ?

E. By a comparison of their languages, their institutions, and most ancient traditions, with that which has spread abroad from mount Ararat. It is generally thought so long a period

can admit only of conjectures, but I hope they will not always continue so.

A. And the history before the deluge ?

E. Passes obviously into a mere record of significant names, genealogical records, and family traditions mingled together ; and here, too, its poverty is a pledge of its truth. The voice of tradition would tell only what was known, and restrained itself to this scanty memorial ;—a barren pedigree ; and the significant names in it are the sole bridge of communication between that ancient world and our own.

A. You speak of significant names.

E. Every name includes in it the whole history of a patriarch. Look at this a moment, and begin with Adam. He is called a man of earth, and that is his history. He was formed from the earth, appointed for the cultivation of the earth, and was returned to earth ; and we know of him nothing further. Abel, a man of sorrow, or who was the occasion of sorrow, gives the history of another. Cain, the first possession ; and the name of his son Enoch also is equally significant. Noah, under whom, or in whose time, the earth was to find rest from the oppression of tyrants ; and so of others.

A. But these could not have been the names, which the persons bore in their life time, for all who gave names to their children were not prophets in regard to their future history. Did Eve know the future fate of Abel, when she gave him his name ?

E. That I do not suppose ; in some cases however the name would afterwards be interpreted in a sense different from that in which it was given. Thus in the example of Cain and Noah. Others suffered perhaps, when the traditions were formed respecting them ; a modification of form, as we find customary in later traditions. Recollect the case of Abram and Abraham, of Sarai and Sarah, of Esau and Edom, Jacob and Israel, &c. The man either assumed from later events in his life a new name, or slightly modified his former

one so as to make it characteristick of his life. In some names this would seem to me to have been very easy, as the kindred forms which proceed from the original root, like branches from the trunk, would sufficiently show. Enoch, the son of Cain, bore his name, indicating initiation, in a different sense from the initiated son of Seth. Cain, Methuselah, and others may be interpreted in different ways ; but for our purpose it is of no consequence. Whether all parents, who gave names to their children before the flood, were prophets or not, the names of their children are significant names. With many of them, as also after the flood with the names of Shem, Japheth, and Ham, was associated the history of their lives, and even of the race, of which they were the origin. From these proper names, therefore, the earliest history proceeded ; on names was it dependent, and by these it was preserved. The general customs of the Orientals, together with their genealogical records, prove this beyond a question.

A. But where the history of the life was not conveyed by the name ?

E. There it was attached to it by a song, a tradition. You see an example of this in the sword of Lamech, and the translation of Enoch. Of the children of Cain no names were preserved, but the race of the inventor and artificer, and so this single well-connected family line leads back to the highest antiquity.

A. We ought then to have these names still in the original language.

E. That seems to me of little importance. Were it another language, and the names translated, as for example the name of Moses, so much the better, since thus the names would become truly significant, and their meaning be explained.

A. But in this you at least carry back the invention of the alphabet to a very high antiquity. For otherwise, the preservation of such names in pedigrees would be scarcely possible.

E. At first, perhaps, only the numbers which exhibit the

ages of the successive generations, were given with some mark to designate the meaning of the name in each, and with this mark would be retained the significant name, and consequently the history of the man. So do all sensuous tribes even now ; and, without a designation of things, mere names in connexion with the lines and numbers could scarcely be written or preserved at all. With the name of Abel was connected perhaps some representation of a man slain, with that of Enoch the picture of a city, &c. This must be the method of proceeding, where there was no alphabet ; but my own belief is, that the alphabet existed at a very early date ; and by this very mode of recording names and registers it would necessarily be soon invented.

A. Soon ? do you say. It is generally considered the latest and most difficult invention.

E. It would be as difficult after three thousand years, as in the first thousand, indeed more difficult. If picture and hieroglyphick writing has once become established, and so far in use, as to serve the most necessary purposes, no alphabetick writing, pretty surely, is ever likely to be thought of, as the example of the Egyptians and Chinese shows. Pictures might become hieroglyphicks, but these would never become letters, if they were modified, for ten thousand years in succession. From the matter which the painter seeks to represent by a picture we could never come at the articulation of a sound, but rather, the more our attention is fixed upon that, the farther we are from this ; and the probability is, that alphabetick writing must have been invented very early, or it never would have existed.

A. The common opinion is quite the contrary of that.

E. The common opinion, as it seems to me, has not been formed on sufficiently clear views in regard to this point. If alphabetick writing was ever to be invented, it must be brought about by reason of something simple, something very definite, and very indispensable, which could not be expressed

by images. Now proper names exhibit these very conditions ; and it is a fact, that names and genealogical registers constitute the earliest traditions of the primeval world. In the second place, it must be found out in reference to objects, which were generally known, where a single word, or at all events, a mark attached to it, should bring the whole matter to mind, and such were significant names, where a word brought to mind the whole life of the individual named. Connected with it, in the third place, were circumstances favourable to invention and memory, such as the long lives of the patriarchs, their simplicity, their avoidance of images and symbols of the divinity, the reverence with which they were regarded by the long line of their posterity, the sublimity of the idea, under which, by means of these simple but mysterious characters, they brought the origin of the human race, and the whole original revelation of God, down to the generations, which had sprung from them. The purest, the earliest, and the most urgent necessity gave rise to the invention or it would never have taken place ; is not such your own view of it ?

A. Very nearly. Who then was the inventor of the alphabet ?

E. That I know not ; who does know ? The traditions of several different nations call him Seth, Thet, Theut, Thoit, all one and the same name. Perhaps it was he, who, according to the import of his own significant name, set up a monument, for alphabetick writing was in truth an everlasting monument. Nor was the invention so difficult, when a man had once fallen upon the track. He analyzed, we may suppose, the sound of the voice in uttering some of the names, which were to be placed upon the genealogical table, and which could not be represented there by significant images, and, this done, the invention was accomplished. Children and grand-children were assembled to learn these monuments, especially on religious festivals, for these memorials of their

fathers were connected with their religious notions and feelings. They learned the names of their fathers combined with these characters, which represented sounds, and so the invention would be rendered fixed, and permanent, as far as any thing could be so. Thus the fifth chapter of Genesis may have been, with its names and numbers, the first tablet of thought in articulate sounds, and transmitted perhaps through Noah, to Shem, as the meaning of the latter name might denote.

A. And the earlier traditions ?

E. They were transmitted probably in pictured images, or by mere oral tradition, until alphabetick writing was more fully established in use. The history of the creation is entirely a sensuous representation arranged by days' works and numbers ; in seven pictures of the separate portions of the created universe ; and, placed with reference to their parallel or corresponding relations, they could be preserved and acknowledged, because the institution of the sabbath renewed and retained them in the recollection. But by this the way was only prepared for hieroglyphick writing. The case was similar with the history of Paradise. When the tree, the woman, and the serpent were painted, there were marks enough to aid and direct the memory, in regard to the cause and manner of what had taken place, and the matter itself ; the removal from Eden, the altered mode of life, was retained alas ! not by the memory merely, but, in deed, and in the reality itself. Do you see in this narrative itself of the primeval world no traces of this mode of preserving the record of events ?

A. I would be very glad if I could, for without that the whole is merely speculative opinion.

E. In the time of Enos, men began to call on the name of Jehovah ; and this, under whatever form of words it may be expressed, presupposes some kind of confession and worship at a publick religious monument. For that reference is

had here to the sons of God, who went in to the daughters of men, is an explanation, that cannot be sustained. Those are called sons of the Elohim, occur in a fragment of a heroic tradition, and are obviously designated heroes, mighty men, as they were clearly shown to be. Here men called themselves by the name of Jehovah, i. e. professed themselves his worshippers ; and we might naturally conjecture this to be the time, when Seth set up such a memorial, as was before spoken of, of the name and word of God, and that the ancient fables of the pillars of Seth were perhaps derived from this. Yet the whole is, and must continue, mere conjecture ; and if we suppose the invention of writing to have been of later date, it is sufficient, that it was made in the family of Seth or of Shem. All the Eastern nations, which have monosyllabick languages, know only hieroglyphicks. A single alphabet alone exists in the world, and the names of the letters in this, even as the Greeks afterwards obtained them through the Phenicians, are obviously Chaldæan, i. e. in the Shemitish language. The Phenicians had not invented it, for as was remarked, they had probably received their language itself from the Shemites, as they lived in the midst of them, and the rest of the descendants of Ham had no alphabetick characters. Even the Egyptians had only hieroglyphicks ; when they received an alphabet, it had what according to common prejudice were the Phenician characters.

A. You do not then, I suppose, consider the story of the tree of knowledge, and the picture of creation, to be of Egyptian origin, formed in some way from hieroglyphick representations, and discovered by Moses ?

E. What is there in these, my friend, that is Egyptian ? or that even resembles the Egyptian hieroglyphicks ? Every thing, which aimed to set forth this history in monuments of art, was ridiculous, and has been ridiculed with good reason as more recent and spurious. And on what is the opinion, to which you refer grounded ? Where are those hieroglyph-



icks to be found, from which Moses formed his account? Where is there any thing like this history in Egyptian mythology and language? That certain conceptions of night, of spirits, of light and æther, with certain Egyptian gods, are met with is nothing to the purpose, for Mizraim too had his conceptions of the primeval world, as handed down from the patriarchs, and from Noah. But how darkly, and gloomily, are they Egyptianized in this mythology. I would be glad to find the Ezra, who from the mud of the Egyptian Nile could draw out and kindle in its purity the holy fire of the first ideas of creation; and the Jeremiah, who could carry it thither and conceal it in that dark and obscure mass. In the languages of the posterity of Shem, which we commonly call Oriental, every thing is clear and strikes the eye at once. The radical principles, the fundamental conceptions, the parallelism of the heavens, and the earth, of God and man, of the inanimate and animate creation, are placed and arranged in accordance with the forms of these languages. Can there be a more decisive proof than this? the formation of a whole class of languages in respect to the sensuous images expressed in the radical forms, and in a style so peculiar. Recollect moreover from what regions these traditions are obviously derived. Paradise, the tree of life, the Cherubim, the deluge—whither does the collector of them himself refer these? Observe the constant progress of culture from East to West, from the Ganges to Ararat, the migration of tribes from the mountain elevations of Asia into the low countries, and finally, at a late period, into Egypt, growing in part out of the mud of the Nile; how natural is this course, and how correspondent is every thing to the history of the earth, and of the human race! Eastwards, in the vicinity of the most elevated regions of Asia, are still found probably the most ancient mythologies, languages, and social organizations of society. There we find still a large class of entirely monosyllabick languages; (for all children speak at first in mona-

syllables) and, what is remarkable, these nations still depend on hieroglyphicks, know no alphabet, and have still their ancient political organization, which arose obviously out of the absolute despotism of paternal authority, preserved through thousands of years, as if for a perpetual memorial of the infancy of the world. If we shall ever learn more thoroughly the mythologies and languages of these countries, we shall see in a clearer light many things pertaining to the original history of our race, and the derivation of the earliest ideas. So much, however, we see with the greatest clearness, that Egypt could by no possibility be the source of these traditions. They came down from the high regions of Asia, and were spread abroad with the diffusion of the Shemitish race. At length Canaan became the spot for their preservation, and all the circumstances of the nation were so ordered, that they could be preserved in their purity.

A. You do not, then, hold the Hebrew language to be the most ancient that has existed, the language of Paradise, the mother of all the languages of the earth.

E. How could it be, at least in its present state? Its radicals are all regular, and of two syllables, and, in its essential features, it is a highly cultivated language. Men who lived a thousand years, must have had a different organization, different organs, consequently also a different language. Lower Asia, where these nations dwelt, (not Cashmire and the upper Ganges,) is obviously the climate for this language. Yet, I hold it to be a daughter of the primeval language, and indeed one of the oldest. The regularity of its radical forms even is no valid objection to this opinion. This fact, indeed, arose from the early use of alphabetick writing; for it is proved from the history of all languages and nations, that "alphabetick characters and writing have universally given regularity to languages, but where hieroglyphicks are used they remain in perpetual infancy and unintelligible barbarism."

A. You give me a clearer general view of this matter,

than I have ever before had. The more one seeks to find all things in each, the less does he find any thing satisfactorily. I will accustom myself to refer back this echo of the primeval times to the simplicity of its origin, and to expect, and hear no more from it, than from the nature of the case, it can say. But must not much, that is given here, be the mere poetical fiction of late times, the tower of Babel, for example, the history of the desolation of Sodom, Jacob's wrestling with the angel, &c.? In regard to the first, you have shown me, that it is a satirical effusion respecting the absurd enterprizes of the first ambitious tyrant. Probably many things occurred during the building, that produced dissensions, and they therefore abandoned the work, and separated from each other. As soon as some of them went away, others followed, as in the melting of snow, the current formed by one mass carries off another. It happened here, as in the migrations near the commencement of the christian era, and this was only the first general migration of the sort. It came too, from the very same region, from which all great migrations have since come, from Tartary, in every age, the fruitful mother of nations. The history of the destruction of Sodom is probably a later poetical dress, with which some Hebrew has clothed facts of history, as the pillar of salt, probably a more recent memorial, may show. And finally the wrestling of Jacob with the angel, even as you explain it, is perhaps nothing more than a poetical description of his earnest wrestling in prayer, with God, that he would protect him from the assault of Esau. We find this prayer related before, and the nocturnal struggle was perhaps the mere fiction of another tradition, which had the name of Elohim, and related every thing in a poetical dress. The Hebrew prophet, who has introduced it, has indeed so understood it. "He strove with the angel and prevailed, for he wept and entreated him." Bodily conflict is not very successfully conducted by weeping and entreaty. Many other poetical em-

bellishments might be named, which we, in the simplicity of our hearts, receive as true history.

E. It would amount to nothing, if the whole were so understood. But your interpretation does not satisfy me. The diversity of languages in the world is a problem, that cannot be explained from the quiet migrations of the various tribes, even when we add to this, climate, face of the country, mode of life, and customs of different races, as productive causes of it. Nations often dwell in close contact, of the same race, i. e. of the same organick formation, but with languages the most diverse. An island, a small continent, embraces often within a narrow space, many such ; and the smallest and most savage tribes abound most in the diversities of language. If we shall ever have a list of all nations, so as to compare them together in respect to the three leading titles, which belong here, their formation, languages, and the mythological stores of the different races, we shall be able to judge of these things more conclusively. So far as I now know, we cannot explain every thing by our conceptions of the migratory movements of the race. That which needs explanation here is not diversities, i. e. dialectical variations of one language, from different degrees of copiousness, and causes of gradual change, but total diversity, confusion, Babel. Something positive must have preceded, which placed men's heads so at variance with each other. Philosophical explanations are not enough, and give no satisfaction. I assume a miraculous event to explain what is related in this tradition, because I can give no natural explanation of it. So it is also with the destruction of Sodom. You have here rather strong features of poetical embellishment, as for example,

The sun was risen upon the earth,  
 When Lot was come to Zoar.  
 Then rained Jehovah, upon Sodom and Gomorrah,  
 Brimstone and fire from Jehovah, out of heaven.  
 He overthrew the cities there,

And all the plain was desolate,  
 And all that dwelt in them, and all that grew.  
 And when Lot's wife looked back behind her,  
 She became a monument of salt :—

that is, she was consumed, and became, even in her form, a monument of destruction, of which in the East, salt was always a standing monument. It may be, that afterwards, upon the place where she died, a monument of bituminous fragments was thrown together, as is customary in the East, and that the expression, pillar of salt, came to be applied to it. Thus this expression, like the repetition of the name Jehovah, who caused it to rain, and again, from whom it rained, appears as a very natural emphasis in the mode of speaking, as every tradition adheres closely and with emphasis to its subject. The perplexing riddles, that have been made out of both these, are unnecessary, or rise from the love of the marvellous. Finally the story of Jacob's wrestling with the angel is related entirely in the tone of historical narrative. It is something in addition to the prayer, and coming after it, not as a paraphrase merely,—but I believe we have said enough of this.

A. You find, therefore, nothing that is properly poetry in these traditions ?

E. As you understand the word poetry, there is but a single poem here, Lamech's on the invention of the sword. (for this, according to the context, and sound interpretation, is the import of it, not an unfeeling expression of joy at the murder of Cain.) It has a metrical relation of members, and even correspondencies of sound. The parallelism occurs in it, and you thus perceive how ancient this is. Lyrick poetry and musick are invented in the same age, and in one and the same family. The former was the daughter of the latter, and they have always been united. In short, here is this brief triumphal song ; but I can only give it without correspondencies of sound, without rhyme,

Ye wives of Lamech, hear my voice,  
 And hearken to my speech.  
 I slew a man, who wounded me,  
 A youth, who smote me with a blow.  
 If Cain shall be seven times avenged,  
 Then Lamech, seventy times seven.

He felt thus forcibly the superior efficacy of iron and of the sword, against the onset of other deadly weapons. Other songs, and properly poetical effusions, are not found in these traditions; but much of the spirit of poetry in the narrative, in respect to every thing, especially in concise thoughts and moral sentiments. In regard to the concise, measured, and majestick form of its contents, the picture of the creation is sublime poetry, though not fitted for musick, or in the form of verse. The blessings pronounced by the patriarchs are all a lofty *mashal*, in concise expressions full of parallelism, though again not designed for musick. The whole narrative description is now pastoral, and now heroick in its own way, but every where characterized by simplicity of expression. The matter of it, and the tone and spirit of the whole, became the basis of the subsequent poetry and history of the race, as the traditions of their fathers do among all nations. In short, my friend, we are now through the entrance way, and shall hereafter survey the building itself.

A. You must allow me yet one question. Have you arrived to any certain conclusion in regard to those hypotheses, which explain the diversity of these traditions in the use of the words Jehovah and Elohim?

E. The diversity, especially in the most ancient pieces, is obvious to the eye, and has been traced out by a recent author\* with an accuracy, which leaves little to be added; unless indeed an aim at too great precision is injurious to the hypothesis itself. Passages are separated by it throughout, which obviously belong together, and are probably from the

\* Eichhorns Einleitung ins A. T. Th. 2. S. 301—383.

same age, perhaps even from the same hand. Regard was probably had to the question, where Elohim, and where Jehovah were placed. The most ancient fragments had Elohim, and also those, in which the most ancient fragments were followed as the guide, or something was related, that was not properly suited to the dignity of Jehovah. Other fragments, taken perhaps from the mouth of tradition at a later period, have Jehovah throughout ; yet in those too, this name was probably often inserted by the compiler. In matters of this kind, we can never arrive at the highest certainty, and in regard to all the traditions, with this or with that name, their origin from one source, the traditions of the family of Shem, cannot fail to be recognized.

#### THE VOICE OF ANTIQUITY.

Whence art thou, hallowed voice of ancient ages ?

And whither bound ?

And how, amid the storm of times and nature's changes,

Hath breathed thy gentle breath ?

Com'st thou from life's fair tree and holy fountain,

In Eden's groves ?

That of creation, and the deep prophetick feeling,

Of man's pure primeval love,

Of that forbidden tree, the cares and sorrows,

Of man deceived,

Of floods, and giants, impious men, that braved the heavens,

Thou speak'st in artless tones ?

Say, how didst thou avoid the sweeping billows,

That drown'd the world ?

And gentle as thou art, escape the wild dispersion

Of nations o'er the earth ?

Did, then, thy father hide thee from the tempest

In Paradise ?

And send thee, with the dove, and leaf of peaceful olive,

To his new chosen son ?

Yes, daughter of the voice divine and human,  
Thou went'st with him,  
(His pledge, his legacy, received from holy fathers,)  
Within his floating ark.

And thou didst cleave through every generation,  
To worthiest names,  
Descending safe, by God's own holy name protected,  
Till we are blessed by thee.

Ye broken echoes, and memorial fragments,  
Of earliest times,  
To me how dear ! for letters, and a pure religion,  
The world received from thee.



## MOSES,

Our distance from each other, my friend, shall not prevent us from considering the character of that great man, who not only founded the political, the religious, and social institutions of the Hebrews, but more fully confirmed the use, and animated the genius, of their poetry. We have now passed through the entrance court of the temple, and, in the fundamental conceptions of their poetry and religion, as well as in the cosmology and most ancient historical notices of this people, have collected, out of the patriarchal traditions, materials, to which we shall hereafter have frequent occasion to refer. Now, the whole scene will be changed ; and we shall no longer find ourselves concerned with a shepherd race, and with pastoral conceptions of God, and of the sphere of human life. A man born and educated in Egypt, but who made Arabia his adopted country, the theatre of his plans, of his deeds, his wanderings, and his miracles, is now before us. From him, too, and the events of his history, even the poetry of his people derives its spirit, its form, and its development.

Let me approach thee nearer, thou serious, sacred shade ! In thee do I contemplate one among the greatest, and most ancient of those mighty men, who were the law-givers and benefactors of the human race ! Let not the brightness of thy countenance shine upon me, as once it shone, but so that I may know the features thereof, and show them to my friend, with that pure light and truth, which thou didst place, as a sacred symbol, upon the breast of the high priest of thy people.

The early events in the life of Moses were of that remarkable kind, which in later periods of antiquity we find, either as history, or fable, in the early lives of many law-givers and distinguished men. A Cyrus, a Romulus, and others, were delivered as he was, and his name reminded him, that the

Divine Being had not without design delivered him from a watery grave, by means of the daughter of the king of that people, which was oppressing his own. In this, as in other instances, it might seem, as though Providence delighted in bringing forth from nothingness the most important products of wisdom and power, by a thread the most slender, and the most complicated in its windings, and even to employ the hand of those, who are hostile to its design, for the accomplishment of its deep and mysterious counsels.

Moses was brought up at the court of Pharaoh. Learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, he was also acquainted with the secret knowledge of the priests, and the political organization of that country, which became the cradle of the political institutions of various other nations. Tradition represents him also as a military leader and hero, but on this point the history of his own nation is silent.

It is no valid objection to the wisdom of Providence, that it carries forward its work by instruments, and attains its divine purposes by human means. The purpose here to be accomplished was to reform ; and, as far as it could be done consistently with other purposes, to bring back to the customs, and to the God of their fathers, a people who had lost these customs in Egypt, and to whom, from their near connexion with the idolatrous worship and priestly domination of the Egyptians, the God of their fathers was no longer familiar. To do this, and restore them from the undisciplined and wandering state, into which their minds had fallen, an Egyptian guide and teacher was necessary ; who might employ those very institutions, to which they had become accustomed in Egypt, in order to restore to them the religion of their fathers, in the form best fitted to their present capacity for understanding and receiving it. Here again, the skill and qualifications of such a leader were necessary, in order to make a lasting impression, and employ even their senses and existing habits for the attainment of the end ; in short, to construct

for them, as Moses did, out of the costume and external accompaniments of idolatry, among a superstitious people, a form of religious worship, and organize a ritual, which, in spite of all that was sensuous and typical in it, was the first political sanctuary of true knowledge on earth. It is idle to pretend to deny, that Moses, in the organization of the priesthood, and the arrangements of the temple and the ritual, had no reference to those Egyptian institutions, in which he was himself educated, and from which he aimed forever to reform and separate his people ; the traces of resemblance are too obvious to be mistaken. That such was the case is sufficiently shown, by the fact, that he built every thing upon the priesthood, and chose and set apart a particular tribe for this office, by the offerings, the purifications, the dress, and the breast-plate of the high-priest, and by many individual rites, which, however, it would be too tedious to enumerate here and compare with those of Egypt. Yet, the spirit of his religion was as obviously not Egyptian. The God, which he taught his people to worship, was Jehovah, the God of his fathers ; and even in forming his ceremonial out of the elements of the Egyptian he employed those only as the creative spirit employs the gross matter, to which it imparts a new organization and life. Wherever any thing bore the impress of superstition, and had only a distant tendency to idolatry, his course was directly opposed to the dark spirit of the slavish and enslaved Egypt. His people were taught to abhor all idolatrous images. The golden calf copied from models of Egyptian art and wisdom, he burned with fire, and in his indignation and zeal, gave it in the ashes, for drink, to the guilty apostates. His temple neither contained nor would admit any outward figure, or representation of God. The Cherubim even he adopted not as Egyptian Sphinxes, but as the marvellous beings, full of meaning and of terror, which were referred to in the traditions of his fathers. His high-priest bore upon his forehead, and his breast, neither hiero-

glyphicks nor idolatrous images, but letters and a sacred inscription. Through light and righteousness, i. e. the illumination of truth, he consecrated him and the twelve tribes of his people to God. The sanctuary, which he gave them, was a temple mysteriously veiled, and adorned with Oriental magnificence, as the palace of the invisible King, of whom no representation dare be formed, whose servants were the priests, and the host of Israel his moving but chosen residence. In regard to offerings and purifications he avoided entirely the superstitions of the Egyptians, and in the choice of food, placed the customs of his people in opposition to those of Egypt, which abounded in amphibious animals, and others of such kinds as were forbidden by Moses to the Israelites. His system of laws is the most ancient model, which we have, at least in a written form, where health, morals, political organization, and the service of God, are all combined in one work and one system.

It is not, however, to be denied, that this whole system was a temporary Egyptian yoke, indispensable indeed to the Israelites of that day, and generally, as being in itself a great and necessary step, in the progress of political development ; but unhappy in the extreme, if, like the Egyptian and Chinese, this must have been in its purpose and result a perpetual yoke, and an unceasing restraint upon the advancement of mankind. This, plainly, was not the purpose of Moses, nor was this his meaning, though he so often called it a perpetual covenant, and must thus impress it upon his barbarous and stiff-necked people, as Lyourgus did his laws. For he promised his people, in his last discourses to them, prophets sent from God, wise and enlightened men, as he was ; he himself improved his own laws, and modified them according to circumstances ; and declared finally the great principle, that not the slavish fear and servile worship practised by the Egyptians, but to love God with all the heart, is the word which abides in the heart, and is the greatest of all the commandments.

His severe punishments were all of them only such as resulted from the sad necessity of the times and of the people. In his last heartfelt discourse, and always indeed, he reminded them of the fatherly kindness and beneficence of God, and placed the curse and the blessing, the harsh servitude of the slave, and the voluntary and affectionate obedience of the child in contrast with each other. His God is long-suffering and abundant in goodness. It is only after long endurance in sparing the offender, and then but for a short space, that he becomes a jealous and avenging God, till his hand is again free to do good and bestow his blessings. What, then, would have been the conduct of that god-like man, had he appeared in those times, when his commands were made a snare to catch the souls of men, and held them in a state of perpetual child-hood? in times, when his system of laws, once living in all its members, had become a lifeless mass, when the least of his precepts had been converted into a golden calf, round which men danced and revelled in the extravagance of a hypocritical idolatry? With thousand-fold reasons might he have ground it to powder, and given it, as a cup of abomination, to his sacrilegious and idolatrous people.

But I return to the history of his life. A deed of youthful heroism drove the future deliverer of his people out of Egypt, for Egypt was no longer necessary to him, and the time for deliverance was not yet come. The deserts of Arabia must become the quiet residence of his riper manhood, and tribes which were kindred to the Israelites in language and origin, were now his neighbours for forty years. Fabulous accounts have represented the Arabian Emir or Sheik, Jethro, as the instigator of Moses, and the author of his political plans; but, if the history has any truth, nothing could be more directly contradictory to the view which it gives. Jethro was indeed a man of prudence and skill, but not of such a spirit, as that, which impelled Moses to undertake a task so difficult, and to human eyes so incomprehensible in its results;

*promised "Sheik"*

for that he was urgently impelled to undertake it, we see in the fact, that his mission was to him unexpected, was unpremeditated, and in his view, incapable of being accomplished. What a self-commending and heroick picture is this simple tranquil history of the mission of Moses, of his deeds in Egypt, of his leading out the Israelites, of his miracles, and wanderings. With no pretence, and no demands upon our admiration, in his faults and weaknesses even, it places before us a man, who never speaks of himself, is never praised, and lives only in his work, in his plans, in his laborious cares, and heroick deeds.

The appearing of God in a flaming bush is entirely Arabian in its character, as the signs and wonders, which he wrought by his hand, are wholly Egyptian. That desert, which is wholly fire, and rock, as it were, exhibits the scenery and the objects, by means of which the presence of the Eternal drew his attention, and was made manifest to him. The miracles, which his hand was empowered to work, were the weapons with which he contended against the magicians and wonder-workers of Egypt. They are of a kind, too, appropriate to Egypt, as are all the plagues, by which he delivers his people from bondage. Serpents, insects, the Nile, filthy and noxious amphibious reptiles, darkness, the destroying angel, here, as it were, represent Egypt, in regard both to its productions and its geographical character.

God led his people out of Egypt with a high hand, and an outstretched arm. He bought his servant for himself out of slavery, and baptized him, as it were, in the waves of the Red Sea, that he might be for him a purchased and a bond servant. The first-born is his also, for he was once delivered, spared, and a perpetual festival of the passover, with the blood of a slaughtered lamb upon the door, must indicate this claim of God, on every house and every generation. On the farther shore of the Red Sea, in sight of the perished hosts of their enemies, was sung in two-fold chorus the triumph-

al song of Moses and Miriam, which afterwards was the pattern of so many psalms and songs of deliverance among this people.

As on eagle's wings God bore onward his redeemed people. A barren desert must become the house for their education and discipline, where he himself supplies them with food and drink, as his first-born, and the special object of his care. These proofs of his goodness were, in subsequent periods, the perpetual theme of their national songs and festival celebrations. How much happier would have been the events of their history, had they also conformed themselves entirely to the purpose, for which their heavenly father separated them from all other nations in a desert, where they subsisted by the supplies which his indulgent hand provided, and fully imbibed the spirit of those laws and customs, by which he was to form them to a people for himself.

In the midst of a wilderness fearfully desolate the law was given with circumstances of fearful magnificence. With awe-struck fear and shuddering was established that covenant, which was to be enforced so often by fearful punishment, by fiery serpents, and the opening of the earth to swallow up the disobedient. Where now was the mild and friendly aspect of the God of Abraham, and of his shepherd sons? Where now was the form, under which he spake with the father of this people, as friend with friend, wrestled with Israel, and blessed him as a youth in his dreaming tent? Where now were those days of innocence and blessedness, when the tent of the patriarchs gave entertainment to angels, and two armies of God encamped around a caravan of simple herdsmen? Now at the presence of the angels of God the mountain is in a flame; now the earth trembles and quakes before his hosts as they go forth to war! No one can fail to perceive the altered language, which now prevails in the description of this journey of the Israelites, when compared with the former patriarchal history. Its terrific tones resound through the

desert of Arabia; God is a rock; a burning and devouring fire. Before him go destructive swarms of hornets, which he sends upon the people of Canaan. He whets his glittering sword; he sends out his arrows, which are thirsty for blood. His messengers of vengeance are Seraphim, fiery serpents, which he himself sends upon his people, and ever and anon he lifts his hand to heaven and swears, I am Jehovah! there is none beside! thy God, apostate Israel, and I live forever. The most sublime poetical effusions and images in the Psalms and Prophets are taken from this journey of Moses through the desert, from his miraculous deeds, his discourses, and especially his last poetical effusion. For this production is obviously, as it were, the original prophecy, the type and pattern of all the prophets. As this is divided into cursing and blessing, paternal exhortation and warning, so are all the prophets. In the tone and movement of the poetry, also, we see a striking similarity. As this begins with an apostrophe to the heavens and the earth, so does Isaiah begin, and many other prophecies and songs, and probably the first chapter of Isaiah was placed first, and made the introduction to all the prophets, on account of its relation to the commencement of Moses. The prophets were directed by the law of Moses, and must form themselves after his example.

In a three-fold manner, therefore, Moses exerted an influence on the poetry of his whole nation, and embraced this, as he did every thing else, in the organization of the state. First, by his deeds; the going forth out of Egypt, the journey through the desert, the conquest of the country, in which God went before him and fought for Israel, were the perpetual subject of songs and poetical descriptions, of which I now name the lamentation of Habakkuk and the 68th Psalm, as perhaps the two most remarkable. This conducting of the Israelites through the desert, was referred to in after times, as the type of all God's dealings with this people, and in it they sought the images and examples to represent their wars



and victories, the blessings and punishments, which they received. The regulation of the service of the sanctuary and of the priesthood also, I reckon among those acts of Moses, by which he influenced continuously the poetry of his people: By means of this it became the poetry of the temple, excluded entirely all idols, and hymns addressed to creatures or fabulous beings, brought the name of Jehovah into connexion with the minutest duties of the citizen, as well as the family relations ; in short made the poetry of the Hebrews in all respects sacred. As Moses and Miriam had sung their song on the shores of the Red Sea, in the same spirit was every thing in after times celebrated as the work of God. As the whole political organization was of a priestly character, as every thing was founded on the offerings and the sanctuary, so poetry clothed itself in all the ornaments of the priesthood, of the temple, and of the ceremonial service ; particularly when David, the reviver of Jewish poetry, adhered much to the magnificence of the sanctuary, and in his songs employed it even in the descriptions of God. Later prophets first ventured to return to the simple covenant of God with Abraham, and, because they saw before them the abuse of offerings, the apostacy of the priests, the idolatry of the temple service, with all its pernicious consequences, to look back beyond it all, and recall to mind the father of the faithful. Especially was this done by the great Isaiah, the eagle with fiery eye, and ethereal sunward motion, among the Hebrew prophets. In this also the plan of Moses had the fate of all systems and plans ; they are first elevated and expanded, then in the end contracted and narrowed down. The poetry of the Hebrews enjoyed an undeniable advantage over all other systems of national poetry, that of being a divine, a pure temple poetry. As such, however, it was abused ; the tree remained stationary and ceased to grow, for it was confined by the roof of the temple. The most sublime tones of ancient times became a meagre echo in the ears of the drowsy and idolatrous ages that succeeded.

The second means, by which Moses acted unceasingly upon the poetry of the nation, was by the description of his own deeds ; by his own poetry and songs. His last poetical effusion, as before remarked, was the pattern of the prophets. The Israelites were required to learn it, and make it familiar to their minds ; and severe as it was upon them, they held it in high esteem. His song at the Red Sea was the model of their Psalms of praise, of triumph, and of deliverance, as the lofty Psalm ascribed to him, which is the 90th in the collection, was the beautiful model of didactick poems. In general, the poetry of Moses, like his life and character, is full of meaning, but severe, earnest, and breathing an air of solitude. It glows with brightness, as his countenance did, but a veil is spread over it. The spirit that breathes in his institutions and writings, is widely diverse from the spirit of Job, of David, and of Solomon. His own description of his institutions and journeyings belongs also to the instrumentality, of which I am speaking. That he recorded his laws, and the journey through the desert, and made the former a canon for the priests, the latter, especially the last repetition of the law, a lesson for the instruction of the people ; that he chose a particular tribe of men, who, relieved from other employments, must devote themselves to reading, copying, and carrying into effect his laws and regulations ; that he excluded all symbols, figures, and hieroglyphics, and employed writing, alphabetick writing, as well for the ornament of the high priest, as for the occupation of the priests, and thereby secured the advantage of it, for his people ; that he probably collected the ancient histories and traditions of his race, and prefixed them to his history, as sacred relicks of antiquity, even as the basis of his law, of his doctrines, and of the claim of Israel to the land of Canaan ; is proof, that he devised his plans, or intended to do so, for making a barbarian people, at least in part, and in the fundamental laws of their organization, into a literary people. The ark of his tabernacle in its alphabetick

inscriptions preserved a treasure of antiquity, and the most powerful instrument of national cultivation, down to the latest times. Were its rude tables of the law still extant, could we still find the stones, on which before his death he placed alphabetick inscriptions, we should truly possess in it the most valuable monument of the primeval world.

The third means, by which Moses even provided for the revival of sacred poetry in times of declension, was the privilege which he gave and secured to the prophets. The far-sighted man anticipated even, by this privilege, the times of the kings, as the times for its exercise, when his prescriptions should be neglected and violated. To their open abominations he opposed a voice, which should call back the people and even the kings to their proper place and duty, and guard itself from danger by the reverence yielded to Moses as the founder of the nation. Such was the voice of the watchmen, the wise men of the nation, who roused their attention, when all was sunk in sleep, who, when the priests were silent and the great tyrannical, spake in the name of Jehovah, advising, comforting, and warning. This privilege conferred by Moses has given us an Elijah and Elisha, an Isaiah and Habakkuk ; it has renewed his form and voice, at least in shadow, and in echo. The prophets are not read understandingly, when they are regarded merely as prophets, as dreamers, and criers in the place of assembly. They were, indeed, successors of Moses, applying and reviving his law in times of declension, and some of them men of great worldly wisdom, distinguished orators, and instructive poets. In Isaiah we have more, perhaps, than a republick of Plato. Finally, I do not consider Moses as the author of the sayings and prophecies of Balaam. In them breathes another, I venture even to say, a more poetical spirit, than in the poetry of Moses. Great as he was in his poetical character, Moses was rather a law-giver than a poet, and his last benedictions especially show, at least, when compared with the blessing of

**Jacob, the effect of old age, and a soul tending to the grave.**

He died, says the beautiful tradition of his people, at the mouth of God, and God himself buried him. He died upon a mountain summit, overlooking a land, for which he had done and suffered all that human powers could do and suffer. His eyes might behold it, but his foot not tread upon it. Even him, though firm as a rock in patience, in doing, and in suffering, had unbelief and impatience caused to waver, and therefore he came not to his place of rest, and survived not the attainment of the end, for which he journeyed. Wise and happy provision for him, that he did not survive it! Thus were preserved, unstained with the blood of the Canaanites, those hands which stretched the rod over the Red Sea, which received the law in the clouds, which built the sanctuary of God. Even in the battle with the Amalekites they were raised only in prayer.

How great is the difference, if we compare them together, between the two brothers, Moses and Aaron. The latter is the body, the former the soul. "He shall be thy mouth, and thou shalt be to him in the place of God!" So it remained always in the relations between priests and prophets. How few priests, even among a people, where they were teachers, judges, preservers of the laws of the nation, and in a sense the regal class, ever opposed themselves to the progress of corruption? Under the judges and kings did not corruption indeed always begin with them? As Aaron made the golden calf, while his brother was holding converse with God, and meditating his laws, upon Mount Sinai, so were a hundred priests the well-fed servants of Baal, while Elijah, the successor of Moses, was mourning upon Mount Horeb or Carmel. Among all the prophets, only two were priests, and those neither the boldest nor the most distinguished.

I have yet to place before you the soul of Moses, severe, full of zeal, and borne down with anxiety, even to death, in his last glowing and poetical effusion. What his deeds, his

institutions, his descriptions, and his other poems have produced for the voice of poetry, we shall enquire in the sequel ; but in this poem the images that surround you, are the flaming mountain, the fiery and cloudy pillars, which went before Israel, and in them the angel of the countenance of Jehovah.

SONG OF MOSES TO THE ASSEMBLED ISRAELITES BEFORE HIS DEATH.

Give ear, O ye heavens, to my speech,  
 Hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.\*  
 My doctrine shall drop as the rain,  
 My words shall distil as the dew,  
 As rain upon the tender herb,  
 And as the showers upon the grass ;  
 For I will publish the name of Jehovah—  
 Ascribe ye greatness to Jehovah our God.  
 He is a rock,† his work is perfect,‡  
 And all his dealings are right ;  
 A God of truth, without iniquity,  
 Sincere and righteous is he.  
 They only are no longer his children,||

\* Moses calls heaven and earth to bear witness in the previous chapter, (Deut. xxxi. 28.) as the prophets often did in later times. The whole of this mild introduction to a didactick poem, that closes in a style so ardent, in after times was frequently imitated in the introduction to similar works.

† The image of a rock, so frequent in this piece as almost to lose its figurative character, (v. 15. 30. 31. 37.) was undoubtedly taken from Sinai and the rocks of Arabia, among which Israel had so long wandered. On Mount Sinai the covenant was made, and on the part of God it was enduring as the everlasting rocks.

‡ The Israelites often complained of the way, in which God led them in the desert. Moses vindicates the cause of the Most High, and shows that of the promises, which he had made to them from the time of Abraham, not one word had yet fallen to the ground.

|| This somewhat harsh arrangement of words, is undoubtedly genuine, because a similar one occurs repeatedly, (v. 17. 21.) and it is, as it were, the soul of the piece. God remains their father, with unchanging faithfulness, but they only have forsaken him, and become first through unlikeness, and then of necessity, no longer his children. They have first become ignorant of him, and he has then rejected them.

Their iniquity hath turned them from him,  
A faithless and perverse generation.

Is this your requital to Jehovah,  
O foolish people and unwise ?  
Is he not thy father, he that hath bought thee ?\*  
That hath made thee, and established thee ?  
Call to remembrance the ancient days,  
The years from generation to generation,  
Ask thy father, and he will shew thee,  
The aged men, and they will tell it thee.†  
When the Almighty gave the nations their lands,  
When he separated the children of men,  
He limited the bounds of the nations,  
That the numbers of Israel might have room ;‡  
For the portion of God is his people,  
Jacob, the lot of his inheritance.

He found him in a desert land,||

\* Moses at this early period, has here the expression, which the prophets often use—that God received Israel in Abraham as a child, prepared him as a people for himself, and gave him being as a father. Under Moses he bought him to himself out of Egypt as a bond servant; and has therefore the claims both of a master, and of a father, as Moses here distinctly expresses it. How truly also is the distinction found in the spirit and the events of the different periods.

† In the sequel is introduced that which it is said the fathers shall relate. Moses goes back to the separation of tribes, and the division of countries among them, when the Almighty, in assigning their dwellings to all nations, drew their limits, as it were, narrower, that the line of his inheritance, Canaan, might be left for the twelve tribes. This land becomes hereby, as it were, the mediterranean, the central point of the earth, as every nation of antiquity held their sanctuary to be, of which we shall speak on another occasion.

‡ That is, the numerous Israel; and in proportion to his numbers will be the space required for the twelve tribes. The words have given occasion to too many fables, and yet are very plain.

|| The march of the Israelites through the wilderness. God found them on the shores of the Red Sea, and led them to the hills of Bashan, the fruits and excellencies of which are described. The words, there was no strange God with them, express the fact, that Israel was led out of Egypt, redeemed, and carried onward, under no other guardian God

In a waste and howling wilderness ;  
 He took him in his arms and taught him ;  
 He guarded him as the apple of his eye.  
 As the eagle covers her nest around,  
 And hovers over her young,  
 Spreads her wings, takes them thereon,  
 And bears them aloft upon her wings ;  
 So did Jehovah lead him, himself alone,  
 There was no strange God with him.  
 He bore him to the mountain heights,  
 And fed him with the fruits of the earth ;  
 He made him to suck honey from the rock,  
 And oil out of the flinty rock,  
 Butter of kine, and milk of sheep,  
 The fat of lambs, and of the rams of Bashan,  
 The fat kidneys of goats, and bread of wheat,\*  
 And thou didst drink the blood of the grape.  
 Then Jeshurun† waxed stout, and rebelled.  
 Thou wast too fat, too satiate, too full,  
 Thou didst forsake the God, that made thee,  
 And lightly esteem the rock of thy salvation.‡  
 They moved his jealousy with strange gods,||

than Jehovah. Their idolatry and abominations with Baal-Peor took place only when they had reached the borders of Canaan.

\* I have departed here from the interpunction of the Hebrews, because the phrase, fat of the kidneys of wheat, seems to have no good sense, and the more natural sense is obvious. The detail of these fruits and eatables is proof, like every thing else in it, of the unborrowed truth of this poem. After the people had been so long in the desert, these hills must seem an Elysium, and their fruits the food of Paradise.

† This word is a title of fondness given to Israel, in the character of a child, a personification, which runs through most of this piece. The name occurs also in the blessings pronounced by Moses and in Isaiah.

‡ The distinction again between the choice of Israel as a son in Abraham, and his purchased deliverance as a servant under Moses.

|| Here we see the precise, and true conceptions of Moses respecting idolatry, which were the ground of his legislation. Idols were a mere nothing, they were an abomination, they were foreign to Israel. The first reason was philosophical, the second moral, the third national. Their Jehovah was for them the alone true, the holy, the good, the ancient God of their fathers, and the guardian God, to whom at Sinai they had placed themselves under new obligations.

They provoked his anger with abominations,  
 They sacrificed to demons, not to God,  
 To idols, of whom they had no knowledge,  
 To new gods, that were newly invented,\*  
 Before whom your fathers trembled not;†  
 Of Him that begat thee,—the Rock—thou wast forgetful,  
 And didst forget the God that formed thee.

This Jehovah saw, and cast away in anger,  
 Those who were his sons and daughters.  
 He said, “ I will turn my face from them,  
 I will see to what end they will come.  
 For they are a perverse generation,  
 Children of a base and faithless sort.

They moved me to jealousy with their no-god,  
 They provoked me to anger with their idols;  
 I also will move their jealousy with a no-people,  
 With a foolish nation I will provoke their anger.‡

For the fire of my wrath is kindled,  
 And shall burn even to the deep abyss,  
 It shall consume the earth and her fruits,  
 And fire the foundations of the mountains.

I will heap up afflictions upon them,  
 And my arrows will I send upon them,  
 Consumed with hunger, and burned with heat,  
 Devoured with bitter destruction,  
 I will send upon them the teeth of wild beasts,  
 With the poison of serpents from the dust.

\* We see how Moses thinks of the God of his people, and of the patriarchs, as an ancient God. Their notices of him, and of the patriarchs, must therefore be ancient also, and anterior to the time of Moses. He did not invent then the religion of the patriarchs, but rather altered it and made the child into a servant.

† The expression is used, not because their fathers trembled with horror before the true God, but because they themselves did before their imaginary gods and demons.

‡ The idiomatick form of expression, children, no-children, God, no-god, nation, no-nation or not-nation, runs through the whole piece, and is entirely in the spirit of the law-giver. The organization, which he formed, was for him the only one; all other nations were to him no nations, not organized states, but uncivilized hordes.



The sword shall be without, and terror within,\*  
 And shall destroy both the young man and virgin,  
 The suckling, and the man of gray hairs.  
 I had almost said, I will destroy them,†  
 And blot out their name among men;  
 Had I not feared the pride of the enemy,  
 That their oppressors would mistake it,  
 And say, "our own high hand,  
 And not Jehovah hath done this."  
 For they are a nation void of counsel,  
 There is no understanding in them.  
 O! that they were wise, to understand this,  
 That they would consider their latter end.  
 How is it, that one can chase a thousand,‡  
 And two of them put ten thousand to flight?  
 Is it not, that their rock hath forsaken them,  
 That Jehovah hath given them for a prey?  
 Else their rock were not like our rock,  
 Our enemies themselves being judges.

Their vine is from the vine of Sodom,  
 Their grapes from the fields of Gomorrah,  
 Grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter,  
 Their juice is the poison of dragons,  
 The deadly venom of serpents.

Have I not already my secret counsel,  
 Sealed and laid up in my treasures?  
 "Vengeance is mine and the day of recompense,  
 Their foot is even now ready to slide,  
 The day of their calamity is at hand,  
 Their destiny is soon coming upon them."

Jehovah is now the judge of his people,||

\* Without and within the cities and houses.

† It is plain, that God is here introduced with human feelings of jealousy, speaking against other national gods.

‡ At once the poet places himself in view of the melancholy end of this people, and how exactly, as well as fearfully, was the prophecy fulfilled! And the legislator of the nation must himself utter it, must close his life, already melancholy, with such prophetick anticipations! a fate, which only a rock like Moses could have sustained.

|| Those translations, which take these lines in a favourable sense, have the context plainly against them. The curse proceeds and contin-

It repents him, that they are his children,  
 He seeth, that their power is departed,  
 That nothing is left to them more.  
 He asks them, where are now their gods,  
 The guardian God, in whom they trusted?  
 Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices,  
 And drank the wine of their drink-offerings?  
 Let them now rise up and help you,  
 Let them now be your protection.

See now, that I, even I am he,  
 And there are no Gods with me.  
 I am he, that killeth and maketh alive,  
 I am he, that woundeth and healeth,  
 And none can deliver out of my hand.

For I lift up my hand to heaven,  
 And say, I am the living one  
 From eternity to eternity.  
 If I whet my glittering sword,  
 And my hand take hold on judgment,  
 I will render vengeance to mine enemies,  
 And will reward them that hate me.\*  
 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,  
 My sword shall satiate itself with flesh,  
 The blood of the slain, and of the captives,  
 With the head of the chief of my enemy.  
 Rejoice, ye Gentiles, now his people,  
 He will avenge the blood of his servants,  
 And render vengeance to his enemies,  
 And purify his land and people.†

ues to the end of the poem. The blessing first begins in the next chapter. It is indeed a fearful consideration, that God must thus forget the father in the judge, and yet feel that they are his children.

\* I can understand these words only as still referring to the Jewish nation, once his children, now his open enemies, on whom he avenges himself. He rejects them, and takes the Gentiles for his people.

† The last line is obscure to my mind, because the connecting particle in the Hebrew is wanting before the word people. It would seem as if it were wished to read as a blessing, what was meant as a curse, though the blessing properly follows in a separate chapter. The Gentiles are here summoned, as now the people of God, to witness the judgment of

God upon Israel. He avenges the blood of his servants upon this people, and purifies the land from sin. (I will not decide, whether in relation to the last word we should read ~~and~~ or ~~from~~ his people. The blessing which follows, as well as that of Jacob, is translated in another work, "Letters on the study of Theology," and need not be repeated here.) This chapter ends like the last of the prophets. The nation is cast forth and banished from the land.

# INDEX

OF THE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED IN THIS  
VOLUME.

GENESIS	I.	1 : p. 55.	58.	5. 6 : p. 198.
		2 : p. 66.		VIII. — p. 200.
		3 : p. 61.		IX. 12 : p. 200.
		4 : p. 67.		25-27 : p. 221.
		6 : p. 69.		X. 8-10 : p. 203.
	11. 12 :	p. 72,		XI. 1-9 : p. 202.
		14 : p. 74.		XII. 1 : p. 222.
		26 : p. 165.		11 : p. 223.
II.	7 :	p. 163.		XIII. 8 : p. 223.
	8 :	p. 123.		XIV. 22 : p. 223.
	9 :	p. 125.		XV. 1. 5. 6 ; p. 224.
	17 :	p. 131.		XVI. 12 : p. 233.
	18-22 :	p. 128.		XVIII. — p. 223.
	23. 24 :	p. 129.		XIX. 23-26 : p. 263.
	25 :	p. 130.		XXI. 15-20 : p. 234.
III.	1 :	p. 55. 132.		XXII. 1 — p. 223.
	5. 7 :	p. 132.		XXIII. — p. 222.
	14 :	p. 135.		XXVII. 27-29 : p. 234.
	15 :	p. 136.		XXVIII. 11-12 : p. 232.
	16-23 :	p. 133. 137.		XXXII. 24-30 : p. 229.
	24 :	p. 141.		XXXVI. 28 : p. 103.
IV.	4-7 :	p. 196.	EXOD.	XXV. 17. 18 : p. 142.
	9-12 :	p. 193.		XXXVI. 8. 35 : p. 142.
	13-16 :	p. 194.	DEUT.	XXXII. 1-43 : p. 280. 285.
	21-24 :	p. 265.	1 SAM.	IV. 4 : p. 146.
	25-26 :	p. 258.	2 SAM.	VI. 2 : p. 146.
V.	1 :	p. 258.	1 KINGS.	VI. 23 : p. 142.
	22-24 :	p. 177.	2 KINGS,	II. 11. 12 : p. 150.
	29 :	p. 200.	JOB,	I. 20, 21 : p. 238.
VI.	2 :	p. 199.		II. 11 : p. 103.
	3 :	p. 197.		III. 3-10 : p. 64.
	4 :	p. 175.		11-19 : p. 185.

- IV. 12-17 : p. 67.  
 V. 8-26 : p. 210.  
 VII. ——— p. 162.  
 VIII. 9, 10 : p. 81.  
       11-18 : p. 168.  
 IX. 2-11 : p. 52.  
 X. 3. 9 : p. 161.  
       20-22 : p. 212.  
 XI. 7-9 : p. 59.  
 XIV. ——— p. 171.  
 XVI. 16-20 : p. 196.  
 XIX. 19-29 : p. 238.  
 XXV. 2-6 : p. 81.  
 XXVI. 2-14 : p. 82.  
 XXVIII. ——— p. 214.  
 XXIX. ——— p. 237.  
 XXXI. ——— p. 240.  
       26. 28 : p. 74.  
       35-37 : p. 113.  
 XXXII. 18-20 : p. 34.  
 XXXIII. 3-6 : p. 164.  
 XXXVI. 22. 33 : p. 85.  
 XXXVII. 1-7 : p. 61. 86.  
       8-24 : p. 88.  
 XXXVIII. 1-11 : p. 88.  
       12-15 : p. 89.  
       16-23 : p. 89.  
       24. 32 : p. 90.  
       30-38 : p. 91.  
       39-41 : p. 99.  
 XXXIX. 1-5 : p. 100.  
       6-13 : p. 100.  
       14-30 : p. 101.  
 XL. 10-19 : p. 105.  
 PSALM, II. 1. 2. 4 : p. 202.  
       VIII. ——— p. 166.  
       XVI. ——— p. 183.  
 XVIII. 5-18 : p. 146. 157.  
 XIX. 5-7 : p. 75.  
 XXIX. 1-10 : p. 158.  
 XLII. 2. 3 : p. 70.  
 XLVI. ——— p. 212.  
 XLIX. ——— p. 180.  
 LXVIII. 18 : p. 150.  
 XC. 8 : p. 195.  
 CIV. 1-3 : p. 67. 69.  
       4 : p. 62.  
       5-18 : p. 71.  
       19-35 : p. 78.  
 CXXXIII. ——— p. 41.  
 CXXXIX. 1-18 : p. 53.  
 CXLVI. ——— p. 213.  
 CXLVII. 15-18 : p. 61.  
 ECCLES. IX. 10 : p. 174.  
       XII. 7 : p. 164.  
 ISA. VI. 1-11 : p. 146.  
       XI. 6-9 : p. 129.  
       XIV. 3-23 : p. 206.  
       13. 14 : p. 149.  
 XXXVII. 16 : p. 146.  
 LI. 1-3 : p. 227.  
 LIV. 7-10 : p. 200.  
 LXXXIV. 15-17 : p. 228.  
 LAM. IV. 21 : p. 103.  
 EZEC. I. 4-28 : p. 143. 146. 151.  
       X. 14 : p. 142. 146.  
 XXVIII. 12-19 : p. 143. 155.  
 XLI. 18 : p. 142.  
 HAB. III. 8 : p. 142.  
       ~~X~~ 11 : p. 75.  
 MAL. II. 14. 15 : p. 227.

# **I N D E X**

TO THE CONTENTS OF THIS VOLUME.

---

**Abel**, his death, 193—the voice of his blood crying in the language of Oriental poetry, 194.

**Abraham** compared with **Enoch**, 178—the reason of his wandering, 222—his community of right and possession in **Canaan**, 223—denial of his wife in **Egypt**, 223—his friendship with **God**, 223—a symbol of the covenant with his people, 225—reverence shown for him in **Hebrew** history, 227.

**Adonim**, 55.

**Alphabetick** writing, its probable origin, &c. 255, 261.

**Angels**, their relation to the **Elohim**, 56—in the most ancient times, personifications of the word of **God**, 62.

**Arabick** wisdom, 104.

**Ass** wild, description of, 100.

**Babel**, explanation of the account of, 201—tower of, 201.

**Behemoth**, the hippopotamus, 106.

**Belial**, king of the shades, 175.

**Brutes**, poetical description of, 77, 99—give occasion for fables, 134—follow the destiny of man, 197.

**Buffalo**, description of, 100.

**Canaan**, earliest reference to, 221—poetry of, 235—language of, 244—right of the **Canaanites** to the land, 246—regarded by the **Shemites** as a race of slaves, 246—their religion, 246.

**Chamois**, description of, 99.

**Chaos** of the **Greeks** unknown to the **Orientals**, 66.

**Chart**, whether the genealogical register of the sons of **Noah** was also a geographical chart, 251.

**Cherubim**, 141—151.

Creation, 59, 62, 88—probable preservation of its history, 258—the picture of it not of Egyptian origin, 259.

Dead, kingdom of the, 170—185.

Deluge, 197, 253.

Eagle, description of, 102.

Earth, picture of its creation, 72—personified, 88.

Edom, 110.

Egyptian, imagery in Job, 105—of the kingdom of the dead, 185—facts of its history in the history of Joseph, 248—hieroglyphics, 259—Egyptian and anti-Egyptian, in the Mosaic laws, 270.

Elegy, See Lamentation.

Elihu, character of his poetry, 85.

Elijah, 150.

Elohim, probable origin of the conception, 55—in Paradise, 132—as beings wiser than men, 136—on the mountains of the gods, 149—Jacob's wrestling with the Elohim, 230—diversity between the traditions with Elohim and those with Jehovah, 365.

Enoch, 177.

Esau blessed, 234.

Fables, arose from observing the characteristics of brutes, 128.

Fall in Paradise, 130—a narrative of a real event, 137—the account of it did not originate in Egyptian hieroglyphics, 259.

Genealogies are the historical records of the Orientals, 249, 254.

God, feeling of his presence in nature, 50—knowledge of him not from slavish fear, 51—earliest notions of him simple, 52—whether polytheistic, 55—unity of God and importance of this conception, 57—God of the heavens and the earth, 58—his word personified, 61—king of the angels, 62—sustainer of creation, 63, 71, 76—description of God in Job, 82—judge among the stars, 82—voice of Jehovah, 158—his address to Job, 88—his intercourse with

- the patriarchs, 224—effects of faith in him, 225—Moses' conception of God, 270—breath of, 163, 165.
- Gods**, sons of the gods, 175.
- Grave**, origin of the kingdom of the dead, 172—Arabick description of it, 186.
- Ham**, his transgression and punishment, 220.
- Heavèn**, representation of it among the Orientals, 68–71—those of the Northern Edda compared, 73—parallelism with the earth, 58.
- Hieroglyphics**, their aid in introducing alphabetick writing, 256–261.
- Horse**, description of, 101—those with the chariot of God, 142—of Elijah, 150.
- Hymns** addressed to objects of nature at variance with the spirit of Hebrew poetry, 74.
- Immortality** of the soul, 170–185.
- Ishmael**, prophecy respecting him, 233.
- Israelites**, as the people of God, 218.
- Jacob**, his character, 228—wrestles with the Elohim, 229—prophecy respecting him, 234.
- Job**, how the book of Job should be read, 81—description of God and nature in it, 81—other particulars in relation to it, 103, 121—description of the realm of shades, 185—view of Providence,—208—representations of Job, 237–242.
- Joseph**, history of, 248.
- Knowledge** of good and evil, 132.
- Language**, its formation, 259—its diversities, 263.
- Language**, poetical, 27—42—Northern and Southern, their relation, 33—Oriental, 34.
- Language**, Hebrew, common mode of learning it, 26—objections to it, 28—its defence, 27–37—parallelism, 39—not wholly without vowels, 44—grammatical form, 45—right mode of learning it, 45—not the same with that of the Canaanites, 244—not the most ancient language, 261.
- Lamech**, his song on the invention of the sword, 265.



- Lamentation over the king of Tyre, 155—Job's over human destiny, 162—that there is no return from the grave, 171—Isaiah's over the king of Babylon, 206.
- Light, Oriental notions of it, 67—its dwelling place, 90.
- Lion, description of it, 99.
- Man, his origin, 161—his destiny, 162—his strength, 163—an image of God, 167—should learn to regard every thing in a moral view, 197.
- Moon, ~~personification~~ personification of it, 75.
- Morning dawn, 47—first and natural image of the creation, 48—personification of it, 67—of the morning star, 68, 89.
- Moses, neither the author nor translator of Job, 108—his poetry, 108—how far concerned in forming the genealogies, 251—life and character, 268—other particulars, 270.
- Mount of the gods in the North, 145.
- Names, significant of the patriarchs, 254—occasion of alphabetick writing, 256.
- Night, ancient night of the Orientals, 65.
- Nimrod, 203.
- Noah, 199—his cursing of Ham, 220—why he also cursed Canaan, 221—his drunkenness, 222.
- Orion, 91.
- Ostrich, description of it, 101.
- Paradise, 122—130—preservation of its history, 258—not from an Egyptian hieroglyphick, 259.
- Parallelism, 38—42—of the heavens and the earth, 60.
- Patriarchs, how regarded in Hebrew poetry, 227—their faults, 228—blessings pronounced by them, 233—back to Abraham, 249—to the flood, 249—before the flood, 254.
- Personification in Hebrew poetry, 93—of brutes, 99—of the realm of shades, 174—of sin, 196.
- Plants in Hebrew poetry, 73.
- Phoenicians, 244.
- Poetry, should render men refined, not savage, 127—relation of it to God, 169.

- Poetry, of nature, among the Orientals, 72—in Job, 83, 93—  
of the Hebrews in relation to the covenant with God, 226—  
of Canaan, 235—what is poetry in Genesis, 264.
- Polytheism of the East, 55—
- Prophets imitate each other, 110—rights given them by Mo-  
ses, 278.
- Providence, 191–210.
- Rain, representations of it, 69, 86, 91.
- Rainbow, 200.
- Rhyme preceded the Saracens in Europe, 42.
- Salt pillar, 264.
- Satan, conception of in Job, 111.
- Sea, 89.
- Serpent in paradise, 132, 134.
- Shemites, their language, 244—right to Canaan, 246—religion  
and spirit, 247.
- Sin, personified, 196.
- Snow, 61, 86.
- Sodom, 307.
- Spirit, 66.
- Stars, personified, 66, 76, 88.
- Sun, not celebrated in hymns by the Hebrews, 74—personified,  
75.
- Thunder, 86, 146, 157, 176.
- Tree of knowledge, 128–130—of life, 124.
- Uz, 103.
- Wisdom, Oriental representations of it, 136, 212, 214.
- World, 59, 91.

## **ERRATUM.**

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**Page 99, 9th line from the bottom, should be arranged with the prose.**

Chromis tuberculata

Nitrogene



THE

(147.59)

# SPIRIT

OF

## HEBREW POETRY,

BY J. G. HERDER.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,  
BY JAMES MARSH.

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.  
VOL. II.

---

BURLINGTON:  
EDWARD SMITH,  
(Successor to Chauncey Goodrich.)

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1833.

**Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1833, by**

**CHAUNCEY GOODRICH,**

**in the office of the Clerk of the District of Vermont.**

## TO THE READER.

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In entering upon this second portion of the work, I would repeat the wishes which I expressed in the preface to the former, and shall only add here such remarks as apply peculiarly to the present volume.

The form of dialogue employed in the introduction is dropped here, because, in treating matters of the kind here presented, it would only have been burthen-some, and have weakened the impression intended to be produced. The reader is supposed rather to be seated in familiar discussion with the author or with himself, and in adopting this supposition he will find the progress and development of the ideas the more natural and agreeable. Where the divisions prove too long, he will find convenient resting places at shorter intervals, in which he may stop and reflect upon what he has already passed over.

I cannot, from the nature of the case, anticipate a universal agreement in opinion upon all the matters here treated of, and the results of some of the enquiries instituted, are perhaps too strange and foreign from received opinions, to gain the assent of the public at once. But what is not done to-day may be done to-morrow, and those, who do not here find satisfaction on topics treated of in this part of the work, I beg will withhold their conclusions, and wait for the third and last parts of it.



In pursuing the discussions I have not, knowingly, wounded the feelings of any one, nor even by a word passed judgment against any. Others, I trust, will award to me the same equitable treatment, and not hastily, in judging, give sentence against me. I leave to every one the reward of his labour, aiming myself only to gather fruits that may be useful, and now and then a flower for enjoyment. What pleasure would it give me to have made more accessible, more natural, and more delightful the view of the Sacred Scriptures, which they exhibit from the side from which I have laboured to present them. The influence of the impression thus produced would be of wide extent, much wider than I can explain by a few brief remarks.

The observations, which, to many readers might appear too learned, I could wish to have passed over by all such. They are inserted for the sake of others, to whom the reasons of my translation must be given. No word is employed without necessity, or for a display of learning; for my vocation is, not to be a verbal critick of the Hebrew language, but to make the Hebrew books intelligible by placing them in their proper light, and to show their proper application and use.

*Weimar, April 24, 1783.*

HERDER.

# I

## OF THE ORIGIN AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTER OF HEBREW POETRY.

**Hebrew Poetry had its origin in**

- 1. The union of outward form with inward feeling. How far therefore it is Divine, and how far human. First essays in poetry among the Hebrews. The most ancient tablet of images. Language and poetry, an imitation of that creative agency, which determines the intelligible essence and outward form of its creations. Whether the poetical images and feelings of one nation, especially an ancient one, are to be judged by those of other nations. Character of the most ancient poetry. Whether individual images can be taken out of their connexions and compared to any purpose with each other. Example in Job's description of the horse.**
- 2. Personification. Origin of this in the human mind. Its effects on morals and poetry. Examples of it from nature, history, and the idea of the Divinity.**
- 3. Fable. Origin of this, and its use in the earliest development of reason, the formation of manners, and maxims of prudence. Respect in which it was held in the East, and its influence on poetry.**
- 4. Tradition. Difference between this and history. Essays in poetical family traditions.**
- 5. Poetical invention. Its design. Examples of it in the Cherub and other inventions, in the kingdom of the dead, &c. Collection of these species under the general conception of the מלך in its different forms.**

**Second species of poetry, the Song. Distinguished from mere figurative discourse. It is expressive of higher emotion, brings movement and purpose into the whole of a production, aims at the expression of harmony, and in the most ancient times was adapted to a chorus.**

**Combination of figurative discourse and the song. Genius of Hebrew poetry, as learned from its origin.**

**Appendix. Some of the grounds of the subjective origin of Hebrew poetry.**

Hitherto, in contemplating the most ancient and sublime phenomena exhibited by the poetry of the Hebrews, we have only stood at the foot of the mountain, and observed objects as they were presented to our view. We will now sit down, and arrange in order the results of our observation. The best conception of a thing is obtained from a knowledge of its origin. We proceed now, therefore, to treat of the origin of Hebrew poetry.

1. This, as I showed in treating of the radical words of the language and the fullness of their meaning, is form and feeling. From without, the forms of sense flow into the soul, which puts upon them the impress of its own feeling, and seeks to express them outwardly by gestures, tones, and other significant indications. The whole universe with its movements and forms is for the outward intuition of man, a vast tablet, on which are pictured all forms of living beings. He stands in a sea of living billows, and the fountain of life, which is within his own being, flows forth and re-acts against them. Thus, what flows in upon him from without, according as he feels it and impresses his own feeling upon it, forms the genius of his poetry in its original elements.

It may therefore be denominated alike human and Divine; for it is in fact both. It was God, who created the fountain of feeling in man, who placed the universe with all its numberless currents setting in upon him, and mingled them with the feelings of his own breast. He gave him also language and the powers of poetical invention, and thus far is the origin of poetry Divine. It is human in respect to the measure and peculiarity of this feeling, and of the expression, which is given to it; for only human organs feel and utter the emotions and conceptions of the poet. Poetry is a Divine language, yet not in the sense that we understand by it what the Divine Being in himself feels and utters; whatever was given to the most godlike men, even through a higher influence, to feel and experience in themselves, was still human.

If we knew more of the psychological and historical circumstances, connected with these higher influences, and with the intercourse of the Elohim with the first children of creation, we might perhaps give also a more definite conclusion respecting the origin of their language and mode of representation. But, since the most ancient history of the human mind has denied us this, we must argue from the effect to the cause, from the outward working to the inward form of feeling, and thus we treat of the origin of poetry only as human.

The spirit of poetry, therefore, was first exhibited in a dictionary of significant names, and expressions full of imagery and of feeling, and I know of no poetry in the world, in which this origin is exhibited in greater purity than in this. The first specimen, which presents itself in it,\* is a series of pictures exhibiting a view of the universe, and arranged in accordance with the dictates of human feeling. Light is the first uttered word of the creator, and the instrument of Divine efficiency in the sensitive human soul. By means of this the creation is unfolded and expanded. The heavens and the earth, night and day, the diurnal and nocturnal luminaries, creatures in the sea and on the land, are measured and estimated with reference to the human eye, to the wants, and the powers of feeling and of arrangement peculiar to man. The wheel of creation revolves with a circumference embracing all that his eye can reach, and stands still in himself as the centre of the circle, the visible God of this lower world. In giving names to all, and ordering all from the impulse of his own inward feeling, and with reference to himself, he becomes an imitator of the Divinity, a second Creator, a true ποιητης, a creative poet. Following this origin of the poetick art, instead of placing its essence in an imitation of nature, as has generally been done, we might still more boldly place it in an imitation of that Divine agency, which creates, and gives

\* Gen. 1

form and determinateness to the objects of its creation. Only the creative thoughts of God, however, are truly objective have actuality in their outward expression, and stand forth existent and living in the products of creative power. Man can only give names to these creations, arrange and link them together; beyond this, his thoughts remain but lifeless forms, his words and the impulses of his feelings are not in themselves living products. Yet, the clearer the intuition, with which we contemplate and systematize the objects of creation, the more unsophisticated and full the impulse of feeling, which impels us to impress every thing with the purest character and fullest measure of humanity—that which marks the analogy of our being to that of God—the more beautiful, the more perfect, and, let us not doubt, the more powerful will be our poetick art. In this feeling of natural beauty and sublimity the child often has the advantage of the man of gray hairs, and nations of the greatest simplicity have in their natural imagery and expressions of natural feeling, the most elevated and touching poetry. I doubt whether this origin of poetry can be better and more beautifully expressed than it is by the Hebrew **לשון**. The word means *to imprint to impress, to impress a form, a likeness*; and so *to speak in proverbs*, as the **משלים** of the Hebrew poetry are proverbs, wise sentences of the highest import; and again *to decide, to put in order, to speak as a king or judge, finally, to reign, to have dominion, to be powerful by the word of one's mouth*. Here we have the history of the origin of poetry and of the part of it, which is most powerful in its influence.

It would scarcely have been deserving of remark, were it not necessary to prevent frequent misconception and abuse, that the poetical images and feelings of one people, and of one age can never be judged, censured, and rejected according to the standard of another people, and another age. Had the Creator so ordered it, that we had all been born upon the same spot of earth, at the same time, with the same feel-

ings and organs, and under the same outward circumstances, there would have been nothing to object against the uniform standard of taste, of which so much has been said. But since nothing is more susceptible and multifarious than the human heart, since nothing is more subtle and evanescent, than the connecting ties, on which its feelings and passions depend, since it even belongs to the perfection of human nature, that it organize and form itself anew under every climate, in every age, and every peculiar mode of existence, since finally that modicum of articulated air, which we call language, and which yet bears upon its light and butterfly wings all the treasures of poetical imagery and sentiment—since this breath of the mouth, in its manifold variations exhibiting the diversities of every people and every age, is a real Proteus, it seems to indicate either a stupid or a proud presumption to require, that every nation, even of the most ancient times, should think, discourse, feel, and fashion its poetical conceptions in a manner to suit our habits and wants. It has been long remarked, that the human race in its successive ages and revolutions seems to follow the vicissitudes of our individual human life, (at least men imagine it to be so), and as the child does not feel, speak, and contemplate the world around him in the same manner as a man of mature age, who would require of nations in the infancy of the world, the facility and rapidity in poetical representation, which with us is the result of experience, the squeamishness and over refinement of our exhausted and worn out hearts. ( We must learn to dwell long upon plain and simple imagery, to revolve them over in our contemplations, to excite the sense of wonder, and picture them in gigantick forms. Such are the views, the language, and the feelings of children. They look with child-like wonder and astonishment, before they learn to perceive with discrimination. Every thing appears to them in the dazzling splendour of novelty. Objects that are unknown; or of larger magnitude, produce an effect

upon their unpractised and yet sensitive organs. They know not as yet how to compare, and by comparison to belittle the objects of their admiration. The tongue strives to express itself, and falls upon strong expressions, because its language is not become weak and facile from a multiplicity of empty sounds and stale metaphorical expressions. They often speak too, as the Orientals, and as uncultivated savages speak, till at length with the progress of nature and art they learn to express themselves like polished or like fashionable men. Let them enjoy their years of childhood, and let those Orientals also in the infancy of the world form their poetical conceptions, speak, and rejoice with a child-like spirit.

Still more incongruous would it be to take a single image or representation out of the connexion, in which it belongs, and compare its style and colouring with those of another, taken from a poet of a different age, of a different nation and language, and of diverse poetical powers. No two things in the world are wholly alike. No one thing is made for the purpose of being compared with another, and the most fresh and delicate growth, when torn from its place, is the first to wither. A poetical image exists only in its connexion with the emotion that prompted it. In losing that it loses every thing, and is only a senseless medley of colours, which only a child values according to the brightness of their tints. Perhaps too no poets lose so much by a comparison of extracted passages and images as the poets of the East. For they are the farthest removed from us, they sung in another world, in part three, four thousand years, before we discoursed about them. Should one compare for example, the picture of a horse in Job with Virgil's description of it, and neglect to remark, who it is that speaks in Job, and for what end, what was the character and estimation of the horse in Virgil's time at Rome, and in the days of Job in Idumæa, and for what purpose it was introduced in these different authors, (to say nothing of language, metre, the genius of the people, and the form of their po-

etry) would he form a good comparative estimate of them? would they be fairly balanced and compared?\* But we proceed.

2. The form or image of sense accompanied with emotion readily becomes in the view of the mind excited by its influence a thing of life, and thus personification is the second higher step in the origin of the poetick art.

It is the nature of the human soul to refer every thing to itself, to think it like itself, and thus to find itself reflected in every thing. That which is agreeable to us we regard as loving us; what is adverse to us, hates us, as we hate it; that, with which we would delight to hold converse, speaks to us also, and its slightest sound, its most trifling utterance, is converted by the power of the imagination into language and intelligent expression. In this respect all ancient nations are alike. Their dictionaries could be formed and collected, and their grammatical forms established only on the principle, that names should be constructed with distinction of gender, and events which took place regarded as workings and agencies of living beings, according to the analogies of our human being. The Hebrew language is full of personifications, and

\* Aikin, in his Essay on the application of natural history to poetry, has instituted such a comparison, and has passed judgment somewhat strangely respecting Job's behemoth and leviathan. No poet will or should, by his descriptions, furnish details for a work on Zoology, since poetry aims not to give particular traits with distinctiveness, but to give power and effect to the combined whole. This must be looked for as the aim of the writer in Job, as in the same passages, the gigantick, the mysterious, and the marvellous, in these pictures, belong to the general purpose of the composition. The distance of Idumæa from Egypt, and the fact that in the former the horse was yet probably a foreign and rare animal, and an object of wonder, rendered this description of it suitable to the aim of the book, and indeed made it necessary. But so soon as we suppose the author to have been an Egyptian, all these relations fail, and are out of place, because in that country every one must have been familiar with the horse, the crocodile, the ostrich, and the hippopotamus.



it is undeniable, that this sympathy, this transfer of one's self into the objects around us, and ascription, as it were, of our own feelings to those objects with which we hold converse, has formed not only the inspiring principle of language, of speech, but to a certain extent also the first development and existence of moral principle. Relations of feeling and moral duties cease, where I conceive nothing in a living being analogous to my own being. The more deeply and inwardly I feel this resemblance, and implicitly believe in it, so much the more delightful will be my sympathy, and the exercise of it, in accordance with my own sensibilities. The most ancient poetry, which exerted such a forming influence upon men in their savage state, made use of this fountain of overflowing sensibility to form and cherish in them the feelings of compassion and benevolence. In the blood of Abel his soul cries from the ground. So to Adam, surrounded by the brute creation, all seemed to be animated by his own feelings, and he sought among them all for a help-meat and companion. The sun and moon were kings of heaven, servants of God, rulers of the world. The waving atmosphere was a brooding dove, and God himself, the creator of all, a work-master, after the manner of men, who looked upon his work, rejoiced in and blessed it. Nay, what is still more bold than this, he was the father of man, and man was appointed to be his vicar and substitute on earth.—Extravagant as this representation may seem to a heartless deist, it was yet natural and necessary for the unbiassed feelings of the human heart. Without God the creation is for us a chaos, and without a God, whose being is analogous to that of man, who thinks and feels as we do, no friendship or filial affection towards him is possible, nor can we feel a child-like confidence in communing with a being, so beyond our knowledge, and yet so intimately near to us. The infinite God, therefore, vouchsafed to render the primary ideas of himself as accessible, to man, as was possible, and as well in the first pictures of

creation, as in the history of the patriarchs ; this friendly confidence and trust is the ground of all the relations of man to God, and of God to man. In the shepherd's tent God also is a shepherd, in the family circle he is the father of all. He visits them as a friend, and permits himself to be invited to the domestick festival. He was more pleased with his son Abel, than with Cain, and in vouchsafing his presence to Noah after the flood he smelled a sweet savour from the renewed earth. On the contrary, he was angry with tyrannical oppressors, and took the field, as it were, against Nimrod, the oppressor of the earth, as if he were also about to scale the heavens. Of Abraham, as if jealous of his paternal love, he required that he should offer up to him his son, the dearest object of his heart, and wrestled with Jacob to secure for him the name of a hero.

In the book of Job we have unfolded and explained some personifications, on which depends the power of the most affecting discourses, and so it is with the excitement of sympathy in all kinds of emotion. If the poetry of the most ancient times has produced any effect upon the human heart, (and it has undoubtedly produced much), it has the power of doing so by this means alone. Hence, where this flexibility of the heart is wanting, even in our own times, and the man contemplates such personifications and measures them by pure reason, and according to geometrical rules, he will find in the Hebrew and Greek poets only irrational extravagances. In Hebrew the whole language is formed upon the principle of personification ; nouns, verbs, and even connecting words are constructed and arranged under its influence. Every thing with them has voice, mouth, hand, countenance, and those relations, which render their representation as son and daughter, one, become necessary for them as for other Orientals a significant and beautiful idiom.\* An idiom, however,

\* Examples are found in Jones' commentar, pœs. Asiaticæ in suffi-

which for the most part has given occasion to the worst misapprehensions, for we may almost affirm it as a general rule “the bolder and more original a poetical conception and figure is, the more it is misunderstood and abused.”

3. A personified object, so soon as it is represented in action, in a way that gives to a general sentiment a sensuous representation becomes a fable. The transition from the one to the other is by a single step, and the East abounds not more in personifications, than in fables.

When God brought the various brutes to Adam to see what he would call them, he placed man in a school of fable. In order to be able to designate an animal by a name he must know its character and instincts, and both were to be learned from the animal's actions and mode of life. The least reflection applied to these, since the man thereby brought them into connexion, and referred them to his own being, led to the perception of a general character in the conduct of the animal, and so, even when unexpressed a fable was already constructed in the mind of the observer. The first dialogue with the serpent, and the circumstance mentioned, that Adam found none like himself among all the objects of creation, pre-suppose this tendency of his mind. It is the *punctum saliens* of fable. It might be said, indeed, that from it proceeded for the yet infant race of man, the first principles of morals and of prudence, and that the poetical conception, that brutes act from similar feelings with men, has had a forming influence in the cultivation of his reason. It is not only that in order to attain it, man must observe the animate creation in its various characters, he was necessitated also to notice the relations to himself of the actions and characters of the brutes, and what was deserving of imitation or otherwise. What we denominate the history of the fall

cient numbers. For the Hebrew of the words *man, son, daughter, countenance, &c.* the lexicons may be referred to.

was the first aberration of his reasoning faculty, the imitation according to an erroneous conception, of a brute, which the teaching of his paternal creator afterwards showed him in its true form, and thereby corrected his false conclusions. As we are now rendered skillful by experience, so then the understanding of man in his state of nature formed and guided itself by observing the contrivances of brutes. Their adaptive powers and propensities are fully developed, their character clearly determined, forcibly and distinctively expressed, and definitely fixed. Here then, man was placed in a school rich in instruction, and as tradition says that he learned most of the arts from the brutes, so it is certain also, that his first observations respecting differences of sense and understanding, and different modes of action, were taken from the brutes. The earliest names, by which distinctive characters among men were designated, are all derived from animals, as the first general maxims relating to manners and prudence for the most part show their origin in fable. This last remark we shall pursue more at large.

A general maxim or sentiment is an abstraction from particular occurrences, and many of these among the Orientals still include the particular case in the general expression, and with the sensuous image and compressed allegory form as it were, an abbreviated fable. So it is with many of the proverbs of Solomon, as in the lesson, which the ant gives to the sluggard, &c. and indeed with all the finest proverbs of ancient nations. The fable was constructed in view of an actual occurrence; the moral lesson was deduced from it, and to aid the recollection of it, and give point to the sentiment, was compressed into a metaphor, a proverb, or even an enigma. All these modes of representation are essentially one, and are all natives of the East, where they are peculiar favourites. There the fable was invented, and there proverbs, maxims, enigmas, even the radical forms of language are full of fable. The whole art of poetry has there a sententious

character, and a dress of fable, which separates it widely from our methodical style in prolonged and rounded periods. There too, those kinds of poetry, which are characterized by allegory and fable, are the most abundant and the most beautiful. In modern languages, on the other hand, for one simple Oriental fable drawn from the kingdom of beasts and of trees, we may furnish ten artificial narrations, which often contain neither fable nor history, and usually fall short of the former in richness of poetical invention. The strings of pearl, as the Orientals call certain collections of choice and well arranged sentences, are well known, and the beautiful tapestry of their instructive and more elevated poetry, which expands its richly ornamented flowers with so much magnificence, appears to them noble and godlike. But of these forms of poetry we shall speak more at large in their proper place ; at present we proceed to remark,

4. That even history in the East, especially when it relates to the ancient patriarchal traditions, readily assumes the dress of fable, and becomes as it were, a poetical and traditional representation of family history. Whoever reads the historical writings of the Old Testament, from the most ancient period, will scarcely deny this, and one, that is acquainted with the historical style of the Orientals, in other histories, will be still less disposed to do so. It is not merely, that here and there, in the simplest narrative, poetical forms of expression are inserted, because the voice of tradition perhaps transferred them from existing songs, or gave them for the sake of adding force to the expression ; not merely, that the narrative itself affects the entire simplicity of the poetical style, in regard to the use of connectives and the repetitions of words ; but for the most part also the form and outline of the whole narrative is poetical. Nor is this at all prejudicial to truth, but rather contributes to its clearness and force, by retaining and exhibiting in the tone and outward form of the narrative, as it were, the original impressions and images of

sense from which it was taken ; only the interpreter must find and retain this point of view, or he will misapprehend the tone of the sentiment, the aim and general scope of the narrative. The history of Paradise, of our first parents, and of the subsequent patriarchs, of the flood, of the tower of Babel, &c. appear obviously in the character of family and national traditions, and so it continues downward to the history of the Jewish patriarchs. Tradition has formed into a sacred narrative, a sort of *fabula morata*, where in every line the favour of Jehovah to their fathers beams forth as the origin, from which they derive the glory of their race, their right to Canaan, and the prerogative which they claim before the nations, which inhabited it. What among other races bears the marvellous character of heroick and extravagant traditions, is here of divine and patriarchal authority, confirmed by genealogical registers and monuments, and exhibiting such simplicity of ornament, that the artificial forms of poetry are unsuitable to it. Among all nations history has grown out of tradition, and among the Hebrews it has remained even down to the period of the kings, in regard to the style, almost always traditionary in its character. To this the language, the modes of thought, which distinguished the people and the sacred writers, but especially the high antiquity of the age, has contributed.

5. I come now to *fiction, or poetical invention* properly so called, which consists in combining known, distinctly marked images, to form a new creation before unknown, and having its own distinctive character. Of this poetical creation the Cherub may serve as an example. The lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle are beings well known ; the combination of them into a creature of symbolical import was the work of poetical invention. It will be observed, that I use poetry and poetical invention, not in the sense of groundless fiction or falsehood ; for in the sphere of the understanding, the import of a symbol poetically constructed is truth. The parts themselves of

the composition are taken from nature, and I know no fiction, which has not received its elements from that source. Hence, the invention of fictions entirely new is so difficult, that the greatest poets copy each other, and nations farthest removed from each other coincide in the essential characters, and leading forms of those beings, with which they have peopled the world of their imaginations. One of these leading forms, the features of which are recognized among all nations, which have poetry, is the Cherub, perhaps the oldest of all poetical creations. It stands on the ruins of Persepolis, which, in the form of their inscriptions, and the style of their architecture, go back beyond the periods of recorded history, and, in the form of the Sphinx, lies before the ruins of numerous Egyptian temples. It is referred to in the marvellous tales of India, of Thibet, of China, of Persia and of Arabia, and occurs in the ancient traditions of the Greeks, as well as in the Northern Sagas, though in every nation under its own peculiar modifications of form. Even the poetry of the Middle Age has made use of it, and scarcely any poetry is unfurnished with winged beings of the same general character. The Hebrews, in my apprehension, have the oldest and purest traditions respecting it, and retain the natural and probable account of the origin of a composition in itself so strange and marvellous. According to their account it was a guardian of Paradise, and thus by consequence a symbol of things secret and mysterious, that is, of places sacred and unapproachable. From this, by an easy transition, it become itself, in its component parts, a mystery, a synthesis of the most noble and exalted of living creatures. It came to be attached to the ark of the covenant, as a guardian of the mysteries of the law, and thereby a sustainer of the Majesty of Jehovah, who watched over them. It was transferred also to the clouds, and became first a poetical, then a prophetic vision. These last applications of it, however, belong to the poetry of the Hebrews alone. The Cherub, in the char-

acter which it bore before the time of Moses, the creature of marvel, that guarded the secrets or treasures of the primeval world, was universally known ; in the character given it among the Hebrews after the age of Moses, as the sustainer of the glory of God, it was known only in Judæa, and passed into it by the transitions, which I have explained.\*

From this Cherub, thus placed in their way, the fancy of the Orientals with its boundless stores of imagery took occasion to produce other like inventions, and upon its wings soared into the regions of wild and extravagant fiction. In relation to this subject the reader should peruse in Bochart's *Hierozocion*, the sixth book relating to fabulous animals, and call to mind the numerous fabled creations in the Oriental tales. The ground of every fiction is for the most part a truth in natural history, so that we have not so properly pure fiction, as truth under the garb of fiction, and the unusual, the singular, and the strange, elevated to the inconceivable and the extravagant. An example of this is found in the history of the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge, in Paradise. This simple, and as given by Moses, intelligible and natural tradition, was gradually, in its subsequent transmission, shaped into a strange and wonderful mystery. Now the tree of life was represented as a peculiarly healthful tree, that stood near to that which bore the forbidden and deadly fruit ; then it become a growth productive of physical immortality ; and the tree, by which God proved the obedience of man, was, even in the representation given of the serpent as the tempter, already become a tree of super-human knowledge. The same process of the fancy will be found in regard to other inventions of Oriental fable. Job's behemoth and leviathan, which were real animals, because they were of foreign growth, large in size, and objects of fear and wonder, were pictured in characters, which with small addition and exaggeration

\* See Vol. 1. Dialogue VI.



would have transformed them entirely into creatures of fable and mere objects of wonder.

In the prophets certain fictitious animals occur, the existence of which was at that time credited in the popular traditions. But aside from these, the Hebrew poetry has kept itself pure from whatever is monstrous and inconceivable in the creations of imagination. As it fills every thing with Jehovah, so its boldest combinations of imagery proceed from this source. The thunder was the voice of God, a voice which the sacred poets understood ; light was his garment which he cast about him as a mantle, and in the morning dawn outspread upon the darkness of the night. The heavens were his tent, his palace, his temple. Universal nature composed a host of living creatures, which he employed as his ministering servants. The universe was filled with his angels, employed as his messengers, but in a form at once beautiful and worthy of the divine being ; for the living powers and objects of nature were themselves the messengers intended, and the angel of his countenance, the often personified Word of God, was the forth-going utterance of his will, the outward expression of the mind of God. If, in the earlier books,\* the gods of the heathen appear as demons, this was in accordance with the delusion of the nations who worshipped them, for most of the Gentiles believed the image, to which they prayed, to be animated by a spirit. The prophets of Israel seized upon this faith, and degraded these demons, as vile, imbecile, and impure beings, subordinate to the true God, till the great Isaiah rejected this also, and exhibited the vanity and nothingness of an idol as it was. Satan himself in earlier times was only an angel of God, whom God sent as his messenger. Opposed to him on the side of Job stood another angel,† who was an advocate in the presence of God for the innocent object of his

\* Deut, xxxii, 16. 17.    † Job, xxxiii, 23.

complaint. Thus the picture presented in this book is wholly of a poetical character, and under the form of a judicial process.

The kingdom of the dead resulted from a combination of conceptions so natural in itself, that I do not wonder at its occurrence among the Hebrews, as among many other nations. No metaphorical separation of the body and the soul was yet known, and the dead with their visibly prostrated powers, were conceived as still living in the grave, but in a shadowy, obscure, and powerless condition. The voice of the murdered victim cried out in his blood, and the feeble, stifled voice of the dead was still represented to the imagination beneath the earth, which covered them. The whispering voices of those, who dwell in the tombs, is a general article of popular faith with the Hebrews, the Arabians,\* and other ancient nations. Now as the tombs of the East were spacious caves, in which multitudes were deposited side by side in their last sleep, the conception of a subterraneous kingdom among the nether shades, was obvious and easily formed. Thither whole families descended to join the ghosts of their fathers. Heroes, kingdoms, and all the trappings of victory, with which they were buried, went down there together. The heroes, who were already there received them; and as powerless shades they pursued the same unsubstantial phantom of glory, which they had pursued in life. To all these hosts of the dead, too, was given a king, with his royal tower or strong hold, whose bars and gates no one could break through; for no power can restore the dead to light and life. There murmured the dark rivers of the dead, because in the deep caverns of the earth we so often meet with streams of water, and hear their obscure, subterraneous, and melancholy sounds. The dying man hears these streams, because according to oft recorded experience, the senses of those

\* See Schulten's Notes on the Hamasa, p. 558.

sinking through weakness, as they gradually fail, have a consciousness of sounds as of distant waves. In the same figurative representations, death, who is always lying in wait for his prey, became a hunter with nets and cords, while at the same time, because the body is fearfully wasted and consumed in the earth, he is described as a monster, who feeds upon and devours the dead.—So ~~neutral~~ were all their transitions of thought, which, with the usual modifications, occasioned by varying circumstances of country and climate. are common to almost all nations.

But enough of examples. We have now treated in regular gradation the several successive kinds of poetical representation, which all proceed from the same source, the utterance of the soul in the language of imagery and emotion. For every one will see, that poetical personifications, the representations of fable, enigmas, sententious proverbs, and finally, the proper creations of poetry, not only themselves belong to the *mashal*, but can derive their distinctive characters, only from the modifications of this same inspiring principle of poetry in the soul. In the most ancient times the language of sentiment was concise, lofty, and full of energy, as we perceive from the blessings pronounced by the patriarchs, the discourses of Job, and the oracles of Balaam. From these the sayings and poetical expressions of the prophets differ strictly speaking, as to their general character and style, only as the weaker from the stronger, the later and often imitative from the ancient and original power. For even among the prophets, and in the same prophet, there are very different degrees of energy and conciseness in their figurative language. The language in their time had already become more practised, images and sentiments had become more common-place, the spirit of poetry did not reach nor retain the vigour and originality of the primitive ages. If these views be correct, there is no sufficient reason for considering the writings of the prophets as constituting a pecu-

liar species of poetry. Their style was often, indeed, that of poetical prose, which still retained the air and movement of the earlier parabalick poetry. When the style is aphoristick, and marked by the mere orderly arrangement of sentences without logical connexion, it necessarily gains in conciseness and dignity, and we have a collection of such sentences in the Proverbs of Solomon. As nearly related to these, we had also enigmas, like that which we have respecting Sampson, in which the tone and parallelism of the perfect *mashal* is observable. All this, therefore, belongs to one and the same class, and the Hebrew הַרְבֵּה, an intricate and dark discourse, includes more than the mere riddle. Every pithy and sententious expression, that is, at the same time difficult of apprehension, belongs to it, and a greater portion of the Oriental figurative style of discourse aims at this as its principal beauty.

To what subject matter this is applied, and whether this sublime or enigmatical style of figurative discourse be expressive of praise or blame, of love or hatred, of joy or sorrow, whether in prolonged or brief effusions, are not considerations of a nature to constitute co-ordinate kinds of poetry. They are all varieties of the same kind, imaginative metaphorical discourse with the uniform and lofty parallelism.

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But we here enter upon a second species of the poetick art, I mean *the song*. So soon as musick was invented, poetry acquired a new power, a more graceful movement, and greater harmony of sound. The simple utterance of motion in images of sense had only the most natural and simple form and dimension, the systole and diastole of the heart and breath—the parallelism. With the accession of musick it acquired a higher tone, a more measured cadence, and even

rhyme, as we see in the song of Lamech. What was before a simple play of the breath, became now a measured sound, a dance, a choral song, a musical utterance of emotion. When musick was invented, lyrick poetry also, and the dance in measured movements without doubt were brought into use. Let us see then what the art of poetry gained or lost by the change.

1. All musical poetry requires a more elevated emotion. If it utters its musical tones in figurative expressions, these must be animated by excited feeling, imparting continuity and unity of character to the lofty movement of the imagery, and giving it a form of more exalted harmony. Whatever may be the character of the emotion, which prevails in a lyrical effusion, its movement and harmony will be regulated accordingly. A hymn of adoration, a fiery ode, a tranquil song of joy, and an elegy expressive of grief and affliction, are not modulated in the same tone and manner. There are, therefore subdivisions of the song, but the general conception is the same in all. The elegy קִינָה, the song of joy or love שִׁיר, the song of praise הַהִלֵּל, and the different modifications of the mode of singing arising from the difference of instruments, all come under the common name, song מִזְמוֹר, which derives its distinctive import from the cadences and caesural pauses, which the musick has introduced. To divide lyrical effusions from a regard to outward circumstances, and to call, for example, a particular species the idyll, is adverse to the spirit of Hebrew poetry, and indeed unpoetical. Among the Greeks every idyll and all its parts were not necessarily song, and on the other hand in the beautiful song of songs all does not partake of the character of the idyll, although the whole corresponds to the general conception of the tranquil song. Even the more general form of figurative utterance, and in its most artificial kind, the dark and involved enigma, is not absolutely opposed to the song, as we perceive in many

of the Psalms,\* and in short, the contents, the subject matter do not determine the kind, but the mode of treatment, and the form in which it is expressed.

2. From this view it appears, that the application of musick, of singing, brings with it a sort of melody, and therefore continuity, plan, purpose, into the whole and all the parts of a lyrical production, such as were not found in the simply figurative style, except so far as it derived them from the subject. Not that I would take from Horace or Pindar a metrical arrangement, by which the Psalms of David should be measured. Every emotion contains its own law, consequently, also, its characteristick aim in itself, and hence those Psalms, which are properly expressive of emotion, cannot be without these. The didactick pieces, though accompanied with musick, have less of these, and so arrange their aphoristick sentences often by the letters of the alphabet. Yet even this shows that the lyric poem as such must have a sort of measure, and a determinate extent, though it should be taken from the alphabet itself.

3. Musick requires harmony of sound, and since Hebrew musick was probably free from the restraints of artificial rules, it could on that account approximate more nearly to the movements of the heart. Nothing is more difficult to translate, than a Hebrew Psalm, especially one adapted to the dance and the choral song of earlier times. Its evanescent tones are breathed in a rhythmical movement of the most free and unrestrained character, while the difficult measures of our language, its protracted and harsh syllables, drag themselves tediously along. In the Hebrew a single word, easily uttered and agreeable in sound, expresses the whole sentiment. In ours ten are often necessary; and though they express it with more logical distinctness, it is with less ease and eloquence.

4. Most of the poetry, that was accompanied with instru-

\* Ps. xlix. 78., &c.

ments among the Orientals, was composed of the choral songs, often sung by several choruses, and sometimes accompanied with the dance. What inspiring fulness of effect this must have given to song in those early times, in which the emotions of the heart, were as yet little controled, when in praise of God or in commemoration of some national blessing it was sung by an assembled people, in the fulness of national pride and of popular exultation, I leave every one to judge according to his own feelings. In our own times, when nations are mingled in confusion, so that we scarcely have the same God, but few interests in common, and no common country, we see nothing of the kind. With them, musick and language had nothing artificial, but were the native, the inspired and inspiring utterance of the heart. No cold and formal stateliness, no chills of a Northern sky, oppressed the soul, and restrained its emotions. The song of Moses and Miriam, the voice of a host of many myriads singing in chorus the song of their deliverance, with sounding instruments of musick, beneath an Arabian sky, and celebrating the glory of Jehovah their deliverer—where is there a song so exciting and so elevating as this? And this, too, was the pattern of the songs of Israel in better times.

Figurative discourse then, the language of metaphor, and allegory, and song, are the two leading forms, under which the spirit of poetry among the Hebrews manifested itself; and should or could there be more? They are poetry for the eye and the ear, through both which they soften and agitate the heart. In the figurative style of discourse an individual speaks. He instructs, reprovcs, consoles, directs, commends, contemplates the past, and discloses the future. The song is sung either by one or many; they sing from the heart and melt the heart, or they infuse instruction in sweet and liquid tones. Both these kinds of poetry were held sacred among the Hebrews. The most eloquent writers in the first kind were the Prophets, and the most sublime lyrical effusions were

the songs of the temple. Whether these two kinds were expanded into ampler forms, as the drama and heroick poetry, will be shown hereafter.

In conclusion, I observe once more, that the same lofty, sententious style, the language of metaphor and allegory, sometimes leads to a hidden and mystical sense. Neither is this peculiar to the Hebrews. It belongs also to the Arabians and the Persians; and the most favourite ode of Hafiz, as a common chance, gives a very subtle and mystical sense, in which he that will look for it may find all the treasures of knowledge. The ground of this lies in the genius, the origin, and the radical principles of Oriental Poetry. A sublime but obscure image, a comparison followed out with acuteness, a divine aphorism, which an enigmatical parallelism utters as it were only from a distance, these forms of expression require to be illustrated and explained. And when a man divinely inspired speaks, when in the name of God he discourses of the destinies of the future, who would not readily anticipate more than perhaps he means to utter. And who would not, moreover, gladly find it afterwards in his divine oracles, even if he be not an Oriental, prone to admiration, and striving after high and mysterious meanings. Thus it has, indeed, fared for centuries with the poetry of the Hebrews, and, if our age and nation deserve any praise, it is for their cool and persevering endeavour to approximate at least, the simple, original sense of those ancient poets, and to listen to their oracles in the true spirit of antiquity, undazzled and unprejudiced by glosses and the notion of a mysterious meaning.\*

\* I have ventured to omit here a short extract from Opitz, a German writer of the seventeenth century, and a poetical effusion of the author on the origin and office of poetry. They seem intended merely for garnishing, and are not necessary to the connexion of the author's views.



## APPENDIX.

Some of the subjective grounds of the origin of Hebrew poetry.

The foregoing remarks treat of the origin and essential characters of Hebrew poetry objectively; they were designed to exhibit the twigs and branches of the tree, as they spring from the trunk and root. But some, perhaps, may wish to see the ground and soil, by which the tree was sustained; in other words to find some of the circumstances designated, in which the language became adapted to such images and emotions, and could extend its powers of expression by personifications, fictions, songs and proverbs. Here too, as in the preceding observations, I shall rather exhibit facts than speculations.

1. Such images and ideas, as even the first chapters of Genesis have preserved to us, are impossible for a savage and uncultivated people. So long as man remained a mere clod, incapable of thought, and urged to action only by the most pressing physical necessities, he could not attain to such abstractions and applications of names, as the first picture of the creation has given in an order and symmetry suited to the understanding of a people still under the dominion of the senses. Whoever may have been the author of this fragment, it gives proof, in its images, and the scope of its representations, of being the work of a skilful master. No Orpheus here tames the tiger, and the lion; no Silenus sings in grandiloquent poetry a cosmogony wrapped in fable. All this was the birth, or abortion, of a later artificial mode of thought, and of a mystifying style of representation. Here all is simple and divine, as if one of the Elohim had himself instructed the genius of humanity. The most slight and facile determinations and classifications of objects are connected together, and poetically expressed to the understanding of man, and he is elevated by an imitation of the invisible Father and Creator, in the alternation of tranquility and active toil, to be the visible lord of creation.

2. But again, these refined ideas, even in the relation, in which they are here placed, are found already fixed in the radical terms of the language, as if they had been planted in, and grown up with it. This language, therefore, however numerous may be the traces, which it bears, in its ideas and the simplicity of its constructions, of the infancy of the race, had already become formed throughout when this first fragment was, I will not say composed, but even conceived. No Caribbean savage speaks in such language, either as to the sound or the formation of the words. Here are no prolonged sounds to signify the most trifling things, no wild wilderness of names clustered together, but all hangs rather on a single thread, and so the whole language branches regularly from the simplest roots. In regard to its etymology and grammar, (I do not say its syntax and style of composition) the ancient Hebrew language is a masterpiece of conciseness and orderly arrangement, corresponding to the impressions of sense. One might well suppose a Divine Being had devised it for the infancy of the human race, in order to communicate, as it were, in short, the earliest conceptions of logical order.

3. A language formed at so early a period was, moreover, a real treasure for the race, which possessed it. They had in it numerous images and emotions already embodied, which became their inheritance, and which they had only to apply. We know nothing of the magnificence and the wisdom, which were embodied in the ancient language of Egypt, but we know thus much, that a Phœnician brought the alphabet to Greece, that the Pelasgians and Ionians were originally Asiatick tribes, having probably an affinity with those, to whom this language belonged. According to the Mosaick records it was transmitted from upper Asia to the banks of the Euphrates, and its whole character gives proof, that the climate of Asia was its birth place. Its ideas are full of striking contrasts, of light and shade, of rest and activity. This is the character of the Oriental heavens, and of the genius of Oriental nations.

In Greenland it would not so early have unfolded itself. Where nature is rude and barren, and man labours under the heavy burthens, which it imposes, he becomes skilled perhaps in the laborious arts, in the severe and dexterous applications both of mind and body, but is not fitted for the development of liberal ideas, of enlarged views, and comprehensive and susceptible emotions.

4. This language, ancient as it was, and formed under a mild and open sky, was transmitted to a race of herdsmen. Men devoted to such a mode of life were well adapted to preserve and more fully to carry out the primitive ideas and historical traditions which it contained. The occupation of herdsmen was one of the earliest in the history of human improvement. Still it presupposes an incipient cultivation, and cannot subsist without divers arts and regulations. These, however, are all of the simplest and most innocent kind. It served to unfold the domestick relations, and to establish paternal and patriarchal authority. It domesticated animals for the use of man, and called forth feelings of gentleness towards the brutes in general. It gave a sense of the freedom of nature, that is still inextinguishable in the minds of the Bedouins, since they avoid cities as the confinement of a prison. If too, in this race of herdsmen ancient impressions of the God of nature, of the patriarchs who were the objects of his love, of moral rectitude and innocence prevailed, they found in this free and roving mode of life a favourable soil, in which to take deeper root, and secure a permanent growth. Hence, the traditions, which we have received of Paradise, of the patriarchs, and of the most ancient fortunes of our race, come in the form of the simple tales of herdsmen. They retained that, which a herdsman might naturally apprehend and preserve in his sphere of life and his associations, as much as was adapted to his forms of thought and mode of living. This same peculiar mode of life gave scope also to those gentler affections, by which we find these traditions so characterized, and to this

we are to ascribe the pictures of friendship with God, and the intimacy of angels with the patriarchal heroes. Let the offering up of Isaac be converted into an allegory representing his mortal sickness and recovery, (not that it was so, but to bring the matter nearer to our modes of conceptions), what admirable firmness in the uncomplaining hero, whose son for three days was in his conceptions already lost to him, and who gave him up without a murmuring word. Let us represent the tower of Babel, as the allegorical description of a conquering and oppressive empire, that ruled despotically upon the earth, and aspired even to the dominion of God in the heavens, and how striking does the fable become! So too, the story of Jacob, who, during his first nightly repose out of his father's house, contemplated the opening heavens, and when beset with dangers wrestled with his protecting angel and prevailed—how beautiful, considered even as fictions, are these traditional tales of a race of herdsmen! To the successive generations, by whom they are rehearsed, these traditions bring God apparently near, and with him bring trust in his goodness, innocence and the cultivation of human affections in all the relations of domestick life. No warrior of the Iroquois, or hunter of the Huron race, could have invented fictions such as these.

5. But again the mode of life had a still more decided influence upon a race secluded from others, and that accounted itself too privileged to admit the intercourse of strangers. And what gave it its peculiar distinction? The same, of which we have already treated, its language, and its original descent, its traditions, and its ancient privileges, the oracles and prophetick blessings of its patriarchs. Why did the Shemites despise Ham and Canaan? Because their ancestor degraded them, and the shame of a deed of villany was fixed upon their family. Why was it, that Ammon and Moab were placed so low by Moses, although at the same time, on account of their affinity to the Israelites, he forbid their being injured? It was

because they were dwellers in caves, and the offspring of an incestuous intercourse, the reproach of which, according to their prevailing notions could never be removed from the family. How came it, that Israel in Egypt remains a distinct people, than an Egyptian ruler, Joseph, with all his pre-eminence of rank among that people, numbered his sons, born of an Egyptian woman of high rank, with these poor herdsmen, and not with the Egyptians? If here be not pride of birth distinctly marked, it can be found nowhere. These poor herdsman had fathers, to whom they gave the highest honour, genealogical records extending even to Adam, which even under the severest oppression, they never failed to have their (scribes) to preserve and transmit. Why did Moses choose rather to suffer affliction and shame with his own people, than to enjoy honour in the land of Egypt, when he had respect to the origin from which he sprung? He saw the ancient prerogatives and claims of his race, and preferred to be its deliverer, though with the greatest hazard, than, in the enjoyment of quiet and dignity, to become their oppressor. These genealogies also, this ancestral pride, of an unmixed race of herdsmen, has, together with their primitive language, preserved to us, free from foreign mythologies, which they regarded as idolatry and superstition, free from the mixtures of learned lore, which they despised, the ancient traditions of the race, and impressed upon their poetry the tendencies, which originally proceeded from the formal and oracular benedictions of their prophetick fathers. In the jumble of nations, which existed in Europe, no such ancient monuments and pure ancestral poetry was possible. In Idumea, where patriarchal princes reigned, and where they followed a severe and laborious mode of life, poetry, also, as the book of Job shows, maintained, in a language originally the same, a severer and more sustained character.

6. In order to preserve and continue genealogical records, writing was obviously necessary, and I have found propable ev-

idences, that alphabetical writing was invented in connexion with this and for this purpose, at a very early period. It was necessary to designate names, on which the whole was built, and, since the sensuous image of the most remarkable circumstances in a man's life was not sufficient for this purpose, there was an effort to combine such an image and a sound together. Thus originated the characters of the most ancient alphabets, and at the same time the names of those characters. Beth, the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, means a house. In form it was made to resemble a house, and at the same time, by chance perhaps, the opening of the mouth in articulating it, and so of other letters. The alphabet must be very ancient, for it seems to have been formed at the same time with the language itself. In these remarks I do not mean to give the Hebrew praise which is not due to it. It is undoubtedly a sort of infantile language, that has not received a progressive development like the Greek and Latin, but its plan was large, well defined, and wisely arranged. Its letters, though imperfect marks, fitted rather to recal the known, than to teach the unknown, were sufficient to determine the radical forms of the language, their inflections, and relations, and, since all ancient nations uttered their words with strong accents, the completion of the most ancient prosody was effected by placing, where it was necessary, a few marks to designate these over the letters. It is sufficiently proved, indeed, that the accents of the most ancient languages were not like our accents, but distinctions of sound of a higher order and resembling musical notes; yet by means of these, within the brief space of the parallelism, the simplest kind of artificial rhythm was produced.

7. All these peculiarities and early advantages induce the belief, that the commencement of human cultivation arose, not from chance, or the mere throw of contingencies among a brute herd, but from paternal care and a Divine Providence. And as little as I am able or would venture to designate the

mode, in which this Divine aid was vouchsafed, still less would I venture to doubt or deny its reality. If we had more numerous written monuments of ancient nations, or if we found them among uncultivated tribes of the present day, this origin would undoubtedly be confirmed by greater variety of evidence. As here narratives are given in simple childlike tones, so it would be found among other nations modified by their peculiar modes of thought. Thus here every thing proceeds from the first original impulse, and the Hebrew race claim no merit, but for transmitting, by their language, climate, and mode of life, these original impressions unmixed and unsophisticated to later times. These appear to me the subjective grounds, which have produced and moulded the original memorials of this people, and the eye of providence cannot here be mistaken or denied.

## II.

### CALLING AND OFFICE OF THE PROPHETS.

#### Of the calling of Moses.

1. **THE** appearance of God to men. Fire was the constant symbol of the manifestation of the Divine presence. What was meant by the angel of God, the angel of his presence. Of God's appearing to Moses, to the Elders of Israel, to Elijah, to Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Comparison of these with his appearing in the most ancient times. Gradations of poetry in the development of images. What influence was exerted on Hebrew poetry by the circumstance that it was permitted to exhibit no picturable form of the Divine Being.
  2. The word of God to Moses; to the later Prophets. Words and deeds according to the circumstances of the times, included in the duties of the Prophets. Power of the prophetick word. Whether the Prophets spöke from the impulse of their own arbitrary will. Form given to the Hebrew poetry by this earnest and determinative influence of inspiration. Diversity of form at different periods.
  3. Signs and wonders exhibited by Moses. For what purpose, and with what effect. Those exhibited by later Prophets, in things external, and in themselves. Examples from Isaiah.
- What the name Prophet originally signified. How transferred to oracular language expressed in poetry and musick. Whether the Prophets in uttering their prophecies were in the exercise of reason. Passages from Isaiah.
- Appendix. Why Prophets were peculiar to the Hebrews.

Most of the Hebrew poets were sacred personages, wise men of the nation, Prophets. Let us point out and unfold some of the peculiarities of this vocation and character. As Moses in his banishment was feeding his herds in the deserts of Arabia, he came to Horeb, the mount of God.\* And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a fiery flame from out of a

\*Ex. v.



bush. And God called him from out the flame and revealed himself to him, as the God of his fathers. He gave him words of commission for the deliverance of his people, and when Moses suggested doubts he gave him signs. Thus *visions words* and *signs*, as with the first and greatest of the Prophets; so afterwards, either separately or together, were the credentials of his followers, and consequently also the soul of their poetry. It is important therefore to speak of these more at large.

1. The *appearance*, which drew the attention of Moses, was a flame of fire in a bush. Let the import of this symbol in the nearer consideration of it be what it might, it was here a symbol of the present *manifestation* of the Divinity, which, under the circumstances of time and place, could not be manifested in a more simple form. What prominent and visible object was there in the Arabian desert, but here and there perhaps a tree, a dry and arid shrub? Moreover, from the most ancient times, fire was in the East, and among almost all nations, a symbol of the Divinity, as from its brightness and other properties, it is well fitted to be. It was, also, generally in the poetry and the institutions of Moses, though without image worship and idolatry, a standing symbol of Jehovah. Thus God is often called by him a consuming fire, whose wrath burns even to the lowest deep. Under the same form, also, he appeared on Mount Sinai; he went before the host of Israel in a cloud of fire, sacred fire fell from heaven and consumed the offering, and a cloud like fire rested over the sanctuary. In the Prophets and Psalms, these images also are customary.

The God, who here reveals himself, assumes the name Jehovah, and is also called the angel of Jehovah.\* Thus Jehovah moved in the cloud before the camp of Israel, and yet it was also the angel of God, who went before Israel, and in other passages, the presence of God himself. Only an

\* Ex. iii. 2. 4. 6.—xiv. 19. 24.—xxxiii. 34.

ignorance of the spirit of Moses in these peculiarities of language, could have created a doubt here, or have formed different kinds of "angels of his presence." The Jehovah of Moses cannot himself be seen, when he appears in the symbol of any natural object; and this is, therefore, his angel, that is, his visible messenger, or according to the beautiful expression of Moses, the name of God is in it. As in the books of Moses it is so often and expressly said, that no man can see or represent to himself the face of God; so on the other hand, the names of God are carefully distinguished from this. Then, too, even in the natural import of the term, the face of God signifies "the special providence and oversight," which accompanied Israel, and so far as an outward sign of this presence was apparent, this sign was denominated the messenger, the angel of his presence.

To Moses, therefore, this divine manifestation was only a symbol. From his later history, we know how God refused to admit him to a vision of himself, though he spake with him as friend with friend. He only passed before him, probably in the violence of a tempest, and flashes of lightning, and called forth a voice of praise\* in view of his deeds, and the Divine attributes of his spiritual being. Among all the conceptions of human genius, there are, I suspect, few situations so sublime, as that so simply exhibited in this Divine narrative.

When Moses came within the sacred tent,  
 The lofty cloud descended low,  
 And stood before the door and spake with him.  
 And all the people saw the cloudy column  
 Stand before the door, and all rose up,  
 And bowed themselves each one before his tent.  
 Jehovah spake with Moses mouth to mouth,  
 As one holds converse with his friend.  
 And Moses said to God, "behold, thou saidst to me,  
 Lead forth this people," but hast not showed me

\* Ex. xxxiii. 9—23. xxxiv. 1—8.

Whom thou wouldst send to be my present help,  
Thou saidst to me "I know thee by thy name,  
And thou hast found favour in my sight,"

Jehovah said, "my presence shall go with thee,  
And I myself will give thee rest."

He said, "if thy presence go not with us,  
Then lead us up no farther hence,  
For whereby now shall it be known  
That I, and this thy people are received by thee?  
If not by this, that thou dost go with us,  
And I and this thy people are distinguished  
From all the nations of the earth?"

Jehovah answered, "even this I do for thee,  
For thou hast found acceptance in my sight,  
And by thy name I know thee."

"Then" I beseech thee "show me thy glory."

My goodness will I make to pass before thee,  
And will proclaim Jehovah's majesty.  
For I am rich in grace, where I give grace,  
And filled with love towards those I love.  
But yet thou canst not see my face,  
For none can see my face and live.

He said again, here is a place by me,  
Where thou shalt stand upon a rock.  
There shall my glory pass before thee,  
And thou shalt stand within the cleft,  
My hand enclosing thee as I pass by.  
Then I will take away my hand,  
And my back parts shalt thou behold,  
But my face shall not be seen.—

And Moses rose up early in the morning,  
And went to Sinai as the Lord commanded him,  
And took the two stone tables in his hand.

Then came down Jehovah in the clouds,  
And stood before him there,  
And proclaimed Jehovah's name.  
He passed by, Jehovah passed before him,  
And proclaimed "The Lord, the Lord God,  
Merciful and gracious, long suffering,  
Abundant in goodness and in truth,  
That keepeth mercy for thousands,

Forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin.  
 But in whose sight the purest are unclean.  
 He visiteth the wickedness of the fathers  
 Upon their children, and their children's children,  
 Unto the third and fourth generation."  
 And Moses hastened, and bowed himself,  
 And fell upon his face, and worshipped.

In like manner he manifested himself to the elders of Israel under outward forms, while in his essential being he could not be the object of sight,

They saw the God of Israel,  
 At his feet it was like glowing sapphire,  
 To look upon like pure transparent sky.

Although, however, an appearance of the invisible God had no place in the primitive Jewish theology, and, when he appeared under a symbolical form, that which was so manifested is called the angel of Jehovah, yet the Divine Being farther adapted himself to the apprehension of the later Prophets. They saw and described the manifestation which God gave of himself. But in this, too, we discover traits derived from Moses, who still remained the basis of the whole economy, varied only in accordance with the times, and the apprehensions of the different Prophets. In the beautiful manifestation made to Elijah, the second Moses, upon the same Horeb, the mount of God, perhaps even in the same cleft of the rock, we cannot fail to recognize a resemblance to the description just now given. Forty days and nights he travelled to Horeb the mount of God, and came to a cave and lodged there. And behold the word of the Lord came to him, and said, "What doest thou here Elijah?" And when he had answered, the voice said, "Go forth and place thyself upon the mountain before the face of Jehovah."\*

And lo ! Jehovah passed before him !  
 A great and violent tempest,

\* 1 Kings xix, 8—13.

That rent the mountains, and brake the rocks,  
 Went forth before Jehovah,  
 But Jehovah was not in the tempest,  
 And after the tempest came an earthquake.  
 But Jehovah was not in the earthquake.  
 And after the earthquake a fire.  
 But Jehovah was not in the fire.  
 And after the fire came a still, small voice,  
 And when Elijah heard the voice,  
 He wrapped his face in his mantle,  
 And went and stood in the door of the cave.  
 And lo ! there came a voice unto him,  
 And said, " What doest thou here Elijah ?"

The vision would seem designed to teach the Prophet, who, in his fiery zeal for reformation, would change every thing by stormy violence, the gentle movements of God's providence, and to exhibit the mildness and longsuffering, of which, in the passage above given, the voice spoke to Moses. Hence the beautiful change in the phenomena of the vision.—To the distinguished Prophet Isaiah, God appeared as a king enthroned and in his kingly temple : the prime ministers of his court stand around : the Cherubim, over which, according to the ancient simple representation, he was wont to dwell, are converted into Seraphim, which derive their characteristics partly from the servants of the throne and partly from the priests of the temple. The whole picture exhibits the regal magnificence and dignity, which mark the style of Isaiah.\*

The year in which the king Uzziah died,  
 I saw Jehovah sitting on a high uplifted throne.  
 His train of glory filled the temple,  
 And round the throne his servants stood,  
 Six wings had each of these,†

\* Isa, vi, 1—4.

† The wings of the Seraphim are derived from the Cherubim, and only their number increased, though the form of the animal, as well as the name, is otherwise changed. Seraphim, according to the import of the

With twain they covered their face,  
 With twain they covered their feet,  
 With twain did they fly.  
 And one cried to another and said,  
 "Holy, holy, holy,  
 Jehovah, God of hosts,  
 The earth is full of thy majesty."  
 The foundations of the pillars moved  
 At the voice of him that cried,  
 And the temple was filled with smoke.

The smoke here mentioned was the smoke of the burnt offering, to which are related also the glowing coals, and the foregoing ascription, for the magnificence of the king and of the temple are here associated together. To Ezechiel God appeared upon a moving throne in the clouds. The sapphire basement under his feet is taken from the vision of the elders as described by Moses; the fiery form in which he manifested himself is also from Moses; except that this ancient seer did not behold God in human form. The still later Daniel is the first of the Prophets, who ventured to represent God fully in the form of man. But even with him the appearance is in a night vision, and not a distinct beholding. It is a figurative representation among other symbolical visions.\*

This I saw, until the thrones were raised,  
 And the ancient of days enthroned,  
 His garment was white as snow,  
 The hair of his head like pure wool,  
 His throne was like the fiery flame,

Arabick term, means lofty forms, nobles, princes, and they exhibit only the human form veiled with wings in token of reverence for their king. Four of their wings are thus employed, while the remaining two for flight designate their office as swift messengers. The composition of the picture is in accordance with the spirit of Isaiah, the elements all from Moses and the Psalms.

\*Dan. vii. 9, 10,

Its wheels like burning fire.  
 A fiery stream issued forth,  
 And went before his face,  
 A thousand thousand ministered to him,  
 Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.  
 The judgment was set,  
 And the Books were opened.

This picture, too, derives its several features from mount Sinai, as they were exhibited in the benedictions of Moses, in numerous Psalms, and even in the vision of Isaiah, and in regard to the human form, as they were hazarded though indistinctly by Ezechiel in the form of the enthroned Jehovah. Thus the appearance of the Divine Being was, with the progress of time more and more developed in sensuous images, of which the earliest periods of antiquity exhibit no traces. In Job, God is the high, the incomprehensible and inconceivable being; who speaks in the tempest and walks upon the revolving circle of the heavens. In the books of Moses he can be looked upon only in his back parts, or in the outward manifestations of his being. He shows himself in his attributes alone, and in striking symbols. In the time of the patriarchs he was conceived by them as a herdsman; to the sleeping Jacob he appeared as the father of the family, while the heavens, in which he dwelt, were the chambers of his house, from which his servants descended upon a ladder, as seen in the vision of the patriarch. To Abraham he was a friend, making a visit of friendship, but denominated an angel, when he appeared in a visible form. The farther we trace the subject the more do symbols disappear, and as it seems to me, the silent reverence of the infinite and ineffable ONE increase. Even among the Prophets the appearance of God in vision was no necessary part of their calling to the prophetic office. Samuel, next in order to Moses, God called only by a voice from his seat above the Cherubim, where no form appeared, and most of the others received the word

of God unaccompanied by a visible manifestation. What this gave to the poetry of the Hebrews to distinguish it from the art among all mythological nations, is obvious of itself. It was the poetry of sages, not of mythological ghostseers and visionary idolaters. Hymns and epick poems, filled with visionary forms of Gods engaged in conflict, were not their work. The odes and songs of praise, which sing of God, praise him in his deeds, in the perfections of his works; with symbolical forms of manifestation they were very sparingly adorned, and traces of these become more abundant in proportion as the primitive sublimity of poetry diminished.

2. But still more important, than the appearance, was the *word of God* to Moses, the revelation of his name, and the commission given for the deliverance of his people. Of the name of Jehovah we shall speak in connexion with the giving of the law. That of which we now speak, the word of God, was the soul, as it were, both of the office and of the productions of the sacred poet. As given to Moses it was an obvious commission, and we find it the same also with the earlier Prophets. A command was given them containing not general precepts merely, but requiring immediate action. So spake Samuel; so also the Seers of the time of David; so Elijah and Elisha. They required the fulfilment of a definite command, and hence I might call them Prophets of action, of deeds, to distinguish them from the later Prophets, whose prophecies consisted more of general instruction, and consolation, of reproof and encouragement. This difference too was founded in the difference of the times. The most ancient and most eminent Prophet, Moses, could speak and do. His whole life was the living word of God, was action. Of Samuel, as the Judge of the nation, the same may be said. In later times the power was in the hands of the kings, and to the Prophets nothing was left but the word; a word however, which they represent as efficient deed, as a most living and energising agency. Hence we find so many images to represent the power of the prophet-



ick word, which by a distant analogy also were applied to the spiritual efficacy of the word of God in general. It is called a fire, a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces and again a quickening and refreshing dew and rain, as in the delightful image of Isaiah. \*

My thoughts are not as your thoughts,  
 Nor my ways as your ways.  
 As heaven is high above the earth,  
 My ways are higher than your ways,  
 And my thoughts than your thoughts.  
 For as the rain and snow come down from heaven,  
 And return not thither, but water the earth,  
 And make it bring forth leaf and herb,  
 That it may give seed and bread to the sower,  
 So is my word, that goeth out of my mouth.  
 It shall not return to me void,  
 But shall accomplish that which I please,  
 And prosper in that whereto I sent it.  
 So shall ye also go out from me with joy.

The term "word of God," itself often means among the Hebrews, guidance, instruction, counsel, and action.

As to Moses, at this early period, unhappily a twofold word was given, to deliver his own people, and previously by numerous plagues to humble the proud and hard-hearted Egyptian, so it was also with the oracles of the Prophets. The import of them is twofold, made up of affliction and consolation, and of deliverance from evil and of punishment, and in both the acts of Moses often literally lie at the foundation. They inflict upon the rebellious and hostile nations all the plagues of Egypt, while they deliver, comfort, and avenge their own people with all the pictures of Divine guidance in the wilderness, of a delightful Canaan, and of a golden age. This I am aware has with many given to the poets of Israel the names of misanthropes, imprecating curses upon the world, nor will

\*Isa. lv. 8—12,

I deny, that from the national pride of the Hebrews, the harsh expressions of many of their Prophets are liable to be misunderstood and abused. It is not, however, true, that every Prophet and poet, according to his peculiar feeling and temperament, from motives of private revenge and malicious humour, could scatter his blessings and curses. As Moses undertook his office unwillingly, so the same was true of most of the later sages, who must be almost constrained by necessity to the discharge of their duty, as Jeremiah, Ezechiel and others. As no one is willingly a herald of sorrow, where he would choose to communicate joy, so we see that the message, which most of the Prophets have to utter, which they treat as already in its accomplishment, as matter of fact, gives to themselves the greatest pain. No one in this respect is more an object of sympathy and compassion than Jeremiah. A soul of the tenderest sensibilities was destined to live in the worst of times, and to anticipate for his people still greater sorrows.\*

My bowels, my bowels ! I'm filled with pain,  
 My very heart is full of anguish,  
 And yet I cannot hold my peace.  
 My soul hath heard the sound of trumpets,  
 The shout and alarm of war.  
 Destruction, desolation, is cried,  
 For all the land is desolate,  
 My tents are suddenly spoiled,  
     How long shall I yet see the standard,  
 And hear the sound of trumpets ?  
 My foolish nation understand me not,  
 Unwise children and void of sense,  
 Wise to do evil, but never to do good.  
     I look abroad upon the earth,  
 And lo ! it is desolate and waste,  
 Upon the heavens, and they have no light,  
 I see the mountains, and they tremble,  
 And all the hills are in commotion.

\* Jer. iv. 19—27.

I behold and lo ! there is no man,  
 And all the birds of heaven are fled.  
 I look and lo ! Carmel is a desert,  
 And all its cities are laid waste  
 Before the presence of Jehovah,  
 Before the blast of his fierce anger.

A Prophet, who prefaces his sorrowful message with such an introduction, certainly does not herald it with a malicious joy, and of such cordial and sympathetick feelings all the Prophets are full. Their souls expand again with the freshness of the rose, when the storm has passed, and their agonized sensibility, relieved from a weight of oppression, exhibits then a seven-fold kindness and benevolence.

That this "energizing word," this outspeaking of God by the mouth of a Prophet, gave to the poetry of the Hebrews a peculiar form, is manifest of itself. To them their oracles had the utmost certainty, and the most vivid impress of truth. They saw the things, which they proclaimed, already unfolding, and thus, they were regarded as seers, nay, even creators of good and evil. They smote the land with the rod of their mouth, and their powerful word again gave it deliverance. God placed his message upon their lips, and breathed on them with the fire of Divine inspiration. Inwardly prompted by an irresistible impulse, they spoke also often against their natural inclinations, and with consequences painful to themselves, overmastered and urged forward by a higher power. Oracles of this kind have little or nothing to correspond to them in the poetry of other nations. Here nothing was invented for pastime. The poet did not picture forth the destruction of Jerusalem, or of Babylon, as a tragick representation. Had the poetical productions of the early sages and poets of Greece been preserved in greater purity, had we more unquestioned remains of their ancient theologians and Prophets, we might find traces of that resemblance, which still undeniably remains in the language of Calchas, Cassandra in Æschylus,

and of those, who prophesied either in visions or at the moment of death. The later Prophets, who received their oracles only in figurative images, in enigmatical representations, and these usually in dreams, speak on that account with less power. God himself distinguishes the clear and unambiguous voice, with which he spake to Moses, from the revelations by visions, figurative descriptions, enigmatical images, and dreams, and the distinction is sufficiently established and clear in the series of Prophets which are still extant. What the oracles of the Hebrew poets moreover, as compared with the poetry of other nations, lose in variety, in outward form and colouring; and in the play of fancy, they gain in the inward consciousness of truth, in godlike dignity, in sacred earnestness, and in these respects will always remain the admiration of the world.

3. To the hesitating and fearful Moses were given *signs*, or miraculous manifestations, which were adapted to the superstitious and conceited Egyptians, and designed to put to shame their wonder-working magicians. These wonders had no more determinate aim than this, and do not belong inseparably to the prophetick office. The greatest of such miracle-workers were subject to be tried by the law of Moses, and could be condemned to death, if they taught any thing contrary to Jehovah. The earlier successors of Moses, Elijah and Elisha, performed miracles in the period of Israel's weakness and idolatry, and these powers of the ancient world seemed to furnish clear proof, as it were, of the victory and triumph of God over the worshippers of Baal, as in the time of Moses over the wise men of Egypt. Among the later Prophets, and those more properly poetical in their character, the signs which they gave were of another kind. Instead of miracles, which supersede the laws of nature, the Prophet often employs singular and remarkable events to serve as suitable signs, that is, testimonies, accompanying his word, with which he commands attention or gives assurance of the truth of his declarations. Of this sort, is the birth of a child, of which Isaiah

speaks as a pledge of the deliverance of the kingdom of Judah, which is determined with reference to the age of the child. Here it was only the connexion between the two events that was remarkable, because it was beyond the powers of merely human foresight. Whatever may be understood by the shadow on the sundial of Ahaz, its regress in the language of the Prophet, was a present sign of returning years in the life of Hezekiah, and therefore in that connexion a pledge of a future event, "a sign." This word has no higher sense and no other dignity among Hebrew writers. Portents and omens were ascribed to foreign idolaters and false prophets, and a resort to them was forbidden. God reserved to himself his signs as pledges and assurances, or as means of rousing attention to the word of Jehovah, and this only on account of unbelief.

In many cases the Prophet himself was the sign, either by means of things, which he was required to set forth as symbols, or by fortunes which he experienced. Of the first, examples occur in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Hosea; of the second, Ezechiel, who lost his wife, the delight of his eyes, and especially Isaiah are witnesses. As in the latter, through the last half of his book, the Israelitish nation is personified, as the servant and child of God in joy and in sorrow; so the Prophet himself as a servant of God, as a symbolical person chosen for this purpose, seems to suffer the whole burden and destiny of his people. In him, as an individual representation, God shows what in the whole nation, by all the evils which they were doomed to suffer in the captivity, he exhibited to all other nations. As the Prophet often feels himself in this to be placed as "a sign," we have hence occasions for those developments of the future, which are so affecting and so nearly connected with his personal feelings, and which have led me to consider these chapters of Isaiah, as the evangelical part of the Old Testament. The connexion between some of them, has indeed, been found so difficult to discover, that in some cases it is hardly known

of whom the Apostle is speaking. By the aid of the connecting link, which has now been given, the personification of Israel in the person of the sympathizing Prophet, we shall find when treating of Isaiah a beautiful connexion in the train of thought, and a clear insight into the future. In short, vision, immediate inspiration, and symbolical action, characterize these sacred poets, and will carry us hereafter to a better conception of the spirit of their poetry.

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But what is the import of the word Prophet? Is it equivalent to vates, poet? or was the Prophet in his original character, a bard, a wandering improvisatore? or finally, were the Prophets men out of their wits, naked dervishes? Let us inquire into the conception attached to the word not by tracing etymologies, which are always unsafe guides, but by observing the obvious use of the term at different periods of time.

The word Prophet, first occurs in the passage\* where God said to Abimelech, "restore the man his wife, for he is a Prophet." The word thus appears to have been known to Abimelech, and since the people over whom he ruled, were of Egyptian origin, the ground of doubt is removed. Among the Egyptians the term was applied to the superior priests; those who held intercourse with the Divinity, and were admitted to a knowledge of Divine mysteries, the interpreters of nature, in a word, those who were the mouth of the Gods. This is plainly the sense, in which the word Prophet occurs in the most ancient writings of the Hebrews. Abraham was represented to the king as a wise and holy man, entrusted with the counsels of the Deity; and who must be preserved harmless, even in a strange land. Again, God says to Moses,† "thou shalt be a God, and Aaron shall be thy Prophet;" showing indis-

\* Gen. xx. 7.

† Compare Ex. vii. 1. with iii. 16.

putably, that a Prophet imports the mouth of God, the speaker of his word, the revealer of his mysteries. In this, its primitive and most proper sense, it often occurs in Moses and the Prophets, and indeed the whole prophetick character and claim, as exemplified in Moses, was founded on this\*. “A Prophet shall God raise up like Moses, who shall speak to you in the name of God. Surely, the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the Prophets.”†

The conception now given, obviously did not include that of a musician and poet. Neither Abraham nor Aaron were poets. Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah and Elisha had nothing to do with poetry, though some of them were very distinguished Prophets. The oracles, which they gave, were in very plain and intelligible prose. On the other hand, David and Solomon were poets, but not Prophets. The example of one,‡ who called for a minstrel, in order as it is said, to awaken in himself the gift of prophecy, has been greatly misapplied. He called him in order to calm and subdue his anger, under the influence of which he was not master of the dictates of reason, much less capable of uttering a Divine Oracle. By the term seers, also, applied to the Prophets in the times of Samuel and David, they were clearly distinguished from minstrels. They saw hidden things, looked into the future, and were what we call wise men, “sages.”

But, secondly, because these wise men, whether they spake of the past, the present, or the future, were the mouth of the Divinity; they spoke also the language of the Divine Being, that is, divinely oracular language, in a lofty figurative style, and so that came to be in name prophetick language, which was the most elevated poetry. Who, in speaking in the name of God, would speak in a manner unworthy of his majesty and dignity? Who that is inspired speaks coldly and without ele-

\* Num. xii. 6. Deut. xviii. 15—20. xxxiv. 10.

† Amos iii. 7. 1 Kings xxii. 22. 23. Jer. v. 13. ‡ 2 Kings iii. 15.

vation ? Did not the Pythia think it necessary to utter her oracles in verse, though it were of the worst style of verse ?—The origin of this notion shows itself from what was said above, but only as an incidental and derivative sense. In all languages poets are called vates ; but only because they were originally considered as divinely inspired seers, and revealers of the future, and because some noble and good men among them, were in reality, the instruments of Divine providence.

Nothing, therefore, is more natural, than that the uttering of Divine Oracles should, in process of time, be denominated prophesying, as we now daily use the word “preaching,” when we speak of a discourse uttered with the preacher’s tone and manner. The evil spirit came upon Saul, and he prophesied, that is, he uttered, amidst his mad ravings, lofty indeed, but irrational expressions. We know from various evidences of it, that poetry and musick had great power over him, and this power manifested itself, in his present weakness. The schools of the prophets, those ancients of Israel, also partook of the inspiration, and prophesied, i. e. spoke in lofty style, as Prophets were accustomed to speak. Miriam, Deborah, and others were Prophetesses, because they had a poetical inspiration, and inspired, especially sacred poetry, was always deemed of supernatural and Divine origin.

And because, in the third place, at that period of the world musick and poetry were associated, and even the poet and musician often united in the same person, it was quite natural also, that the notion of oracular discourse should be extended even to this art. Asaph and Heman prophesied upon stringed instruments, that is, they uttered in their songs sacred and lofty sentiments, they resolved, as they themselves say, the dark problems of wisdom by the sound of the harp. Poetry never produces so powerful an effect, as when it is supported by musick, and the sacred feeling, which is diffused by both arts combined, is enthusiasm. But it does not follow, therefore, that every Prophet had his instrument by his side, or that his



name and office distinguished him as a minstrel. The prophet Balaam, with his sublime and oracular declarations, spoke without an instrument, and the far feeble language of many of the later Prophets, which almost sinks to the level of prose, was scarcely fitted for musick. They carefully distinguished lyric song from their prophetick style.

Finally the Prophet, and the man of disordered intellect are not the same. We must greatly mistake the lofty and political character and sentiments of Isaiah, if we consider him abandoned by reason. That many of their symbolical acts must appear very strange, they themselves confess, and this was the very aim of their actions. Under the guise of folly was concealed a deep and important meaning, and if the expression, *insanire cum sapientia*, could ever be applied with propriety, it was here. They were, at all events, often the object of sarcasm to the vulgar, and of supercilious contempt to godless kings. While Jehovah was an object of reproach, oracles uttered in his name and containing severe admonitions would be counted folly and madness. But alas! the event gave sufficient evidence of their truth.

Jehovah gave to me the tongue of the learned,\*  
That I might know to speak in season  
A word to them that are weary.  
He waked me morning by morning,  
He made mine ear to hearken,  
As scholars hearken to the wise.

Jehovah spake to me in mine ear,  
And I rebelled not, neither resisted him.  
I gave my back to those that smote me,  
And my cheeks to them that insulted me,  
Nor hid my face from shame and spitting.  
My God Jehovah stood by me,  
And therefore was I not confounded,  
But hardened my face like flint,  
And knew I should not be ashamed.

\* Isa. l. 3,

Since he is near that justifieth me,  
 Who is he that will contend with me?  
 Let us stand together in judgment!  
 Let him, who is against me, come near!  
 Behold, Jehovah is my helper,  
 Who is he that condemneth me?  
 They all shall wax old as a garment,  
 The moth shall consume them!  
 Who is among you, that feareth Jehovah,  
 And obeyeth the voice of his servant,  
 But walketh in thick darkness,  
 And seeth no light?  
 Let him trust in Jehovah,  
 And cast himself upon his God.  
 Behold all ye that kindle a fire,  
 That compass yourselves with sparks,  
 Go walk in the light of your fire,  
 And by the sparks which ye have kindled.  
 One movement of my hand upon you\*  
 And ye shall lie down in sorrow.

\* How simple and unambitious, yet how sublime an expression! The Prophet but lifts his hand and their lights are quenched. They lie down sadly dejected upon the earth and in darkness.

## THE PROPHETS.

My inmost soul your sainted spirits greets ;  
Ye true and faithful messengers of God !  
Take now, amidst your palmy groves, that rest,  
Which Horeb, Zion, Carmel never gave.

How manifold the gifts ye gave of old  
To your primeval ages ! Laws and rites  
Divine, and faith, and solemn services  
Your mouths imparted free as living streams.

To states prosperity and steadfast rule,  
And customs wise and good by you were given.  
For great in soul, exalted far above  
The present times, and freed from vulgar fears,

Ye stood superior to the idle cares,  
And senseless turmoil of the busy throng,  
And backward far and forward cast your view,  
And saw the heavenly light of ages shine.

The light of ages, streaming through all time,  
Enkindled in your souls a heavenly fire.  
That, glowing long obscure, sent forth at length  
A glorious light for nations yet unborn.

For ye applied, within your holy caves,  
Your ear confidingly to catch the sound  
Of that small voice, to which at dead of night  
And early dawn, your wakeful hearts were tuned.

Like gentle showers from heaven, thus gently came  
Those tones, which yet with all the tempest's force,  
Awoke the slumbering world, as if the past  
And future times had sent their murmurs there.

Again I greet you, with exulting voice,  
 Ye guileless souls, that in the hands of God  
 Like harps responded, and expressed his will,  
 Revealed the future and his laws enforced.

Oh thou, who on the holy mount thyself \*  
 Didst lift above thy people and thine age,  
 And see, amid the thickest smoke, that light,  
 That wisdom now and glory gives to all.

And thou, whose kindling spirit summoned fires  
 From heaven, and from the dead the widow's son, †  
 Thou too, who didst behold Jehovah clothed  
 With heavenly brightness and with glory crowned ; ‡

Ye mourners, who with deepest sadest tones  
 And tears of anguish uttered forth your griefs ; ¶  
 And ye, who at the Prophets' setting sun  
 In shadowy twilight saw the promised times ; §

Ye Prophets all, who now in purer light,  
 Escaped from inward and from outward thrall,  
 Breathe tranquilly in palmy groves that peace,  
 Which Horeb, Zion, Carmel never gave ;

What now do I behold ? In friendly guise  
 Commingled with you are the wise and good  
 Of other nations, friends of God on earth,  
 The Druids, Orpheus and Pythagoras,

And Plato, and whoe'er by wholesome laws  
 Has proved his people's father and their guide,  
 Has listened to the voice of God in truth,  
 And yeilded up to God a guileless heart.

\* Moses. † Elijah. ‡ Isaiah. ¶ Jeremiah and others. § Daniel and others. The evening or setting sun of the Prophets means the closing period of the Prophets.

## APPENDIX.

## Reasons why Prophets were peculiar to the Israelites.

The existence of Prophets among the Hebrews, as their peculiar privilege, it has seemed to me, may also be shown to be connected with the peculiarities of their history. As it was a matter of ancestral pride, that they had their Origines, which, distinguished with marks of peculiar favour by the creator, went back even to the beginning of the world, so this sacred treasure of the family, by which they were so distinctly characterised, was manifest in the mode of thinking and the history of their most honoured patriarchs. Seth, Noah, Shem may be referred to as examples, and Abraham was remarkably distinguished by this characteristick. He left his country in order to serve the God of their fathers in a region where a Melchisedeck yet lived.

But to be more particular, the following circumstances should be noticed as connected with the history of this subject.

1. The *head of the family*, was, in the early periods of Hebrew history, the *priest* of his household, and at the same time the guardian of the religious ceremonies and sanctuary of the family. In relation too to such men as Abraham, the denomination of a *Prophet*, that is, of one entrusted with the Divine counsels, and, what is of still higher import even that of a *friend of God*, was by no means hyperbolical. Even in the book of Job a Prophet occurs, and throughout that work a religious tone prevails, which was the sacred impress of the primeval world. All wisdom in the East proceeded from God, all piety and devotion turned the mind to him.

2. Israel went down to Egypt, and here we know all religion had become already a matter of political management and state-craft. Their Prophets were an organised society of priests. As Moses was instructed in the wisdom, which they taught, and now learned, that the true sources of that, which led

to communion with God, were to be found among his own ancestors, so when God appeared to himself, and employed him as his instrument, no better word was in use, by which to designate his office than the word *Prophet*. Prediction, or the foretelling of future events, was as little thought of with him as with Abraham. The word signified a man, through whom God spake, and by whose instrumentality he accomplished his purposes. Could the worthiest object be designated by a more appropriate name? Has the Divine Being a nobler work among men than their cultivation? And was not he who undertook to advance this in those early times, amid obstacles apparently boundless, and with no human support, whether he did it as a teacher, or as an actor on the stage of life, was he not truly a man of God, a genius of humanity? Let one but look at those nations, which have remained behind or sunk into a savage state; observe to what a condition of horrible depravity human nature sinks, when it is not forced upward by a living power and aroused from its gloomy lethargy, and he will then be able to appreciate the services of those early guardians of our race, who diffused the enlightening influence of their spirits over succeeding ages, embraced nations within the compass of their affections, and, even against their will, raised them from degradation with a giant power. Such men the Divine Being has scattered sparingly in the world. They form not mere human and worldly institutions, but they supply what the necessities of our being require, and heaven permits them, like the stars of night, to shine in a sphere far exalted above their fellow men. They offer up their lives in order to carry into effect, to execute *that word and deed*, with which as a divine commission they have been intrusted—*animæ magnæ prodigi*. That Moses represented in this sense the genius of humanity there can be no doubt.

3. They also, who were his helpers for the accomplishment of his work were, filled with a portion of that spirit, which rested on him. "God took of the spirit of Moses and laid it

on them" according to the simple expression of the original. Nor was this great man envious of the favours imparted to them, but wished rather, that all the people were partakers of the same spirit. Thus were those men of prudence and understanding, who were to judge Israel, filled with the Spirit of God. So also the work-masters of the tabernacle, because by their art they contributed to the completion of his work. He expressed moreover the hope, that since the purpose of his law continued unaccomplished, a Prophet would be raised up like unto himself, who should carry his work forward to its ultimate perfection. All that contributed to the well being, to the illumination, the freedom and security of the people of Jehovah, was excited and organized for its end by the Spirit of Jehovah, as the examples of the Judges clearly prove. This may be regarded as a beautiful and striking peculiarity of the nation.

4. But as the noblest and best things of this world are liable to abuse, so also was the name of Prophet. *Oratores legis, advocati patriæ* it was their duty to be, and they became in process of time priests of Baal, false Prophets, so that Micah and Elijah found themselves in their times alone as witnesses of the God of truth, and Amos desires not to be denominated a Prophet. It was with his office, as it is with all offices so soon as they become a mere mechanical employment.

5. Again let no one create difficulties for himself neither in regard to prophetick visions, nor with respect to wonders and signs, as connected with prophetick history. Both were incidental and not indispensably necessary to the calling of a Prophet. The foregoing treatise has shown, that the Divine Being is represented with more and more traces of outward and sensuous magnificence the more debased the times became, and the more the human spirit needed the exciting influence of striking representations. As the word of God became less effectual by the simplicity of its inherent power and energy, it drew to itself more of the incidental and the external. And

finally we must interpret prophetick signs and wonders according to the *usus loquendi* of the East. Whatever is extraordinary and strikingly significant is denominated a sign, even a book, a writing, a poem, an artificial expression, how much more a remarkable event or exciting phenomenon of the times. To such the attention of these sages was directed, and when they addressed the people they placed them in the most striking light. They were the mouth of Providence, and saw and interpreted that which Providence exhibited to their view.

6. It is, moreover, a vain attempt to aim at penetrating and working ourselves into the subjective condition of the Prophets, when the spirit of the times has been so entirely changed. Among the Prophets themselves, the modes of inspiration were diverse, according to the particular age, in which they lived, and the peculiarities of the individual mind. How then shall we, or how can we, by all our distinctions, determine how the soul of Moses, of Elijah, of Isaiah was affected and conditioned by the prophetick spirit, which was imparted to it? We, who know indeed, scarcely more how it was with the subjective being of Pythagoras, of Calchas, or of Homer. If we knew this, why might we not form our own souls after the same model, and produce works, which, so far as their relation to the Divinity is concerned, might shame a Homer, an Æschylus, or a Pindar. What reverence for the Gods do we find in them, and here and there what sublimity and dignity, approaching almost to that of the Prophets!—It not only explains nothing to refer this to superstition, and that to a heated fancy, &c., but it prevents our contemplating and using their works in the right spirit; for in all that is referred to the so called power of imagination in them, there is much of wisdom. Let us leave to each Prophet and sage, the free enjoyment of his own individual style of representation, and of writing, as we must leave to him his age and its characteristic aims, while we employ the fruits of his spirit only, for the benefit of our own times.



### III.

#### DIVINE GUIDANCE IN THE DESERT.

**The History of Moses considered as a subject for epick poetry. Its influence on the poetry of the Hebrews. Idomatick representations of deliverance out of great waters, of blooming deserts, and of the Shechinah. The 114th Psalm. Moses' triumphal song at the Red Sea. Appearance of God on Mount Sinai. Personification of the flames of fire upon the mountain, as a retinue of angels, as a warlike host, and as chariots of war. God of Sabaoth. Origin of this name. Its signification as extended in later times. The triumphal march of God as in the 68th Psalm. What we are to understand by the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud, and by the smoke and fiery splendours of Sinai. Whether the passage of the Israelites through the sea is a mythical representation. How it was applied by the Hebrews. Habakkuk's song of lamentation, accompanied with remarks.**

It has been matter of wonder to me, that among so many heroick poems in our language on subjects of Hebrew history, we have yet none in which Moses is the hero. The deliverance of his people from bondage, and the forming of them to the purest system of religious worship, and the freest political organization of those early times, would be, as it seems to me, a nobler theme than the horrors and extravagances of war and knight errantry. The most ancient lawgiver, of which we have any knowledge, combined, in the organization of his work, ideas, which even at the present day, are in many respects still uncomprehended, and above our reach. The history of his life is full of the most remarkable vicissitudes. Born and brought up in Egypt, he went into voluntary exile from patriotick motives. His calling in the wilderness, the controversy of the God of his fathers with Pharaoh and the wise men of Egypt, the Exodus of the people, and their passage

through the sea, the pillars of fire and of a cloud, the giving of the law, the wonders wrought in Arabia, together with the distant view of the promised land; all this would furnish a subject, which, by the richness and variety of its materials derived from nature, art, religion, customs, and nations, and an accompaniment of the marvellous, that is at the same time full of nature, would almost of itself, assume the form of an epic, that is, of an ancient moral and heroic narrative. Yet, I would wish, by this brief exposition to excite to such an undertaking, not a German, but a German Hebrew. To him the subject is a national one. His more unbiassed and more early acquaintance with the poets of his nation, must give to the work more simplicity in his mind, than could be expected of a German scholar. We have the books of Moses, and if we leave out the genealogical registers and the incidental matters, and arrange in proper order those which are most original, in a style of poetical freedom, and simplicity, we need nothing farther to make a heroic poem of the deeds and laws of Moses, of the most ancient and authentic form.

Since we have already spoken of the calling of Moses, we will now proceed to treat briefly of his doings, of his conducting his people out of Egypt, his passage through the sea, and his journey through the Arabian desert. Obviously, this is the heroic age of Hebrew poetry. When the Psalms celebrate in formal order the whole series of the works of God, they commence, after the general work of creation, with the national benefits bestowed upon Israel, among which the deliverance out of Egypt, the journey through Arabia, and the conquest of Canaan hold the most distinguished place. The 104th—107th Psalms are all one, and upon this subject. Their division into distinct Psalms is only for the convenience of shorter divisions, and on account of the musick. In the 135th and 136th, which I consider more ancient than those before mentioned, this preference for the history of Moses is still more noticeable. They are undoubtedly, of the age of

Asaph and David, as is shown by the 68th and 78th, which very nearly resemble them. In the Prophets, the most favourite and almost all the figurative language throughout, is drawn from the times of this strange and remarkable history.

When Israel was a child,\*  
 Then I loved him and called him,  
 As my son out of Egypt.  
 Ephraim also I taught to go,  
 And took them by their arms,  
 In leading strings conducting them,  
 And led them as a child with care,  
 And took the yoke of bondage off.  
 I was thy God from Egypt forth,  
 Thou knewest no other God,  
 And no deliverer but me. *Ex. 15/*  
 In the wilderness I fed thee,  
 There in their pastures were they full.  
 They were full, their heart was proud,  
 And they forgot their God.

The images here are all from the song of Moses, as also the affectionate designation of first born son is derived from his history. That Israel is the child of God, and chosen of him among all nations, is the favourite designation employed by Isaiah, from the 42d chapter to the end of the book. The highest interest of these passages escapes, when we neglect to bear in mind that primeval and wonderful history of the nation. I have often wondered why it was, that in the Psalms and Prophets we meet with so many images of the depths of the sea, from which God wrought deliverance, of streams, through which he is said to wade, while Canaan had so little immediate connexion with the sea. It is obvious, that these images are all derived from the Red Sea and the river Jordan, through which God in a miraculous manner conducted his people; and hence, the general image conveyed by this histor-

\* Hosea, xi.

ical fact became a customary and idiomatical expression. "He delivered me, he brought me up out of great waters," is in the writings of David the symbol used in relation to all dangers. Thus, among those, to which he applies it, he pictures the tempest and the helping hand of God, extended from the clouds. Commentators seem to me injudicious, when they seek always to refer these images to particular events in the history of his life. It was a received national symbol of deliverance, referred to, and deriving its import from the history of their marvellous triumphs. To the same origin are to be referred all those forms of expression, in which God is said to give this and that people for Israel, and to offer up nations for their sake. When the Prophet explains himself, it is always Egypt, that is given up for Israel, and the sacrifice of this he applies with effect to other cases. Similar remarks may be made in regard to the deserts, which God makes plains and fruitful fields; images in which were clothed even the return from captivity, and the delights of a coming golden age. I must go through a great, though perhaps, the most delightful part of Isaiah, and of other Prophets, if I would furnish all the rich examples that occur, to illustrate these views. We find extended, indeed, even to the future world the images derived from the deliverance out of Egypt, the passage through the Red Sea, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Sechinah, which dwelt above them, and Canaan the object of their hopes, and in the Revelation of John, an exquisite abridgment of all the Prophets, they are exalted to the highest point of dignity. To a young man, who would understand the Psalms and Prophets in their true spirit, I might give it, indeed, as a general rule, superseding all others; "read Moses! read the Mosaic history!" A single word occurring in this poetry, often gives occasion for the finest poetical development through entire chapters. What Homer is to the Greeks, that Moses is in his relation to the Hebrews.

Of the plagues of Egypt we shall speak hereafter. At pre-

sent we shall only notice some of the triumphal songs, designed to celebrate the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and the wonders connected with it.

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## A HEBREW ODE FROM THE HISTORY OF THE HEROIC AGE.

### THE 114th PSALM.

When Israel went from Egypt forth,  
 The house of Jacob from a strange people,  
 Then Judah was his sanctuary,  
 And Israel his dominion.  
 The sea beheld and fled,  
 Jordan was driven back,  
 The mountains leaped like rams,  
 The hills, they skipped like lambs.  
 What ailed thee, O sea, that thou fleddest,  
 Thou Jordan that thou drewest back,  
 Ye mountains, that ye leaped like rams,  
 Ye hills, that ye skipped like lambs?  
 Before the Lord the earth did quake,  
 Before the presence of the God of Jacob,  
 Who turned the rock to living water,  
 The flinty stone to a flowing fountain.

This psalm is one of the finest odes in any language. The abrupt brevity, with which each particular is expressed, the astonished admiration ascribed to the sea, to Jordan, to the mountains, and hills, and repeated in the interrogatory form, the sublime explanation, that it all proceeded from a single glance of Jehovah, who looked upon them from the clouds, a look, which converted rocks and stones to streams and living fountains, all these give us, in the compass of this little ode, the substance of a long description.

The passage of the Red Sea produced the most ancient and sonorous song of triumph, which we have in this language. It is, a choral ode, one voice describing perhaps the acts themselves, those of the chorus striking in and as it were re-echoing the sentiment. Its structure is simple, full of alliteration and rhyme, which I could not give in our language without doing violence to it, for the Hebrew, from the simplicity of its forms, is full of such harmonious correspondencies of sound. Flowing and prolonged words but few in number float upon the air, and terminate for the most part in an obscure monosyllabic sound, that formed perhaps the burden of the chorus. Here is a feeble imitation of the untranslatable but most ancient triumphal ode in any language,

#### SONG OF MOSES AT THE RED SEA.

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel  
 This song unto the Lord,  
 And they spake saying,  
 I will sing unto the Lord,  
 For he hath triumphed gloriously,  
 The horse and his rider hath he thrown  
 Into the depths of the sea.  
 The Lord is my strength and my song,  
 He is become my salvation.  
 He is my God and I will praise him,  
 My father's God, and I will exalt him,  
 Jehovah is a man of war,  
 Jehovah is his name.  
 Pharaoh's chariots and his host  
 Hath he cast into the sea,  
 The choicest of his captains  
 Are sunk into the reedy sea.  
 The floods have covered them,  
 They sank into the depths,  
 Like a stone.

Thy right hand, O Jehovah,  
 Hath shown itself glorious in majesty,  
 Thy right hand, O Jehovah,

Hath dashed in pieces the enemy.  
 By thine exalted power  
 Thou dashest those that rise against thee.  
 Thou sentest forth thy wrath,  
 It consumed them like stubble.

At the blast of thy nostrils,  
 The waters were gathered together.  
 The swelling flood stood up like heaps,  
 The waves were congealed  
 In the depths of the sea.

The enemy said I will pursue,  
 Will seize, will divide the spoil;  
 My soul shall glut itself with them,  
 My sword will I draw out,  
 And utterly destroy them.

Then breathed thy wind,  
 The sea covered them,  
 They sank as lead  
 In the mighty waters.

Who is like to thee O Lord!  
 Who, among the Gods?  
 Who is like thee glorious in holiness,  
 Fearful in praises, doing wonders.

Thou stretchedst out thy hand,  
 The earth swallowed them up.  
 With gentle hand thou leddest forth  
 The people which thou hadst redeemed.  
 Thou guidest them with strength  
 Unto thy holy habitation.

The nations hear thereof and tremble,  
 Grief seizes on the dwellers in Philistia,  
 The princes of Edom are amazed,  
 The heroes of Moab are seized with dread,  
 The dwellers in Canaan are melting away.

Let fear and dread fall upon them,  
 The terrors of death from thy mighty arm.  
 Let them be motionless as a stone,  
 Till thy people, O Lord, pass over,  
 Till thy people pass, whom thou hast redeemed.

Bring them in O Lord,  
 Plant thy people

Upon the mount of thine inheritance,  
 The place of thy habitation,  
 Which thou hast made ready for thyself,  
 The sanctuary, which thy hands have made.  
 Jehovah reigns forever and ever.

The song perhaps terminated here, and the following was only a brief recapitulation of the contents.

Forth marched the horse of Pharaoh and his chariots,  
 He went with his horsemen down into the sea.  
 Then brought Jehovah upon them  
 The returning waves of the sea.  
 The tribes of Israel passed dry  
 Through the midst of the sea.

So that these lines were a sort of brief memorial, such as every one might retain in memory concerning the whole event. If passages occur in this song such as we should suppose could not yet have been sung there, let it be borne in mind, that the temple, the sanctuary, and the land, to which they were journeying, were in the mind of God and of Moses already present, and that Moses by these anticipated as it were in triumph the institutions and regulations, which were to be formed.

This song, of which I have given but a feeble echo, gave their tone to the triumphal songs of the Hebrews, as the song of Deborah and the 68th Psalm evince. The rythmical movement is animated by the same cæsuras and cadences and by the same lively correspondencies of sound. The frequent exclamations, the oft recurring

Praise to Jehovah!  
 Sing praises to Jehovah!

the excitations addressed to the hearers, or the singers themselves, which at intervals interrupt, or rather animate the current of thoughts anew, form as it were the stave, on which



the historical song is arranged. In the Psalms the hallelujah grew out of this, as an animating and joyous shout of the chorus, known to many nations in nearly the same form, and by the Hebrews consecrated to their Jah or Jehovah.

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The appearance of God upon Sinai is in the simple description of Moses itself fearfully sublime,\* and it was therefore very naturally, that it became the subject of the most magnificent poetry. Moses had it distinctly in his thoughts, when he wrote his benedictions,† and here too he speaks as one holding close communion with God, who derived pleasure and instruction from things the most fearful. The most High in his majesty, and his hand armed with lightnings is in his conceptions a father, and the teacher of his assembled children. The sequel will develop this more fully. At present we remark only, that the appearance of God upon Mount Sinai gave occasion for personifications, which adorn the whole body of Hebrew poetry. The splendour and the burning radiance, in which God was manifested, became, in the language of poetry, angels, orders and retinues, in the midst of which the Law was given. Even David‡ formed them into a warlike encampment, and Daniel§ then made these ten thousand thousand around the most High servants obedient to his command. A series of Rabbinical subtilties, representing the Law as given and uttered forth by angels, is founded upon the same.

As Jehovah moved from Sinai in the character of a God of war, to fight for Israel, it was in accordance with it, that this host accompanied him. Thus, he appears in the song of Deborah, where the stars in battle array fought for Israel,§ and I doubt not that hence the exalted name of God, Jehovah Sabaoth, became a distinct and peculiar designation with the He-

\* Ex. xix. 20. † Deut. xxxiii. 2. ‡ Ps. xlvii 18.

|| Dan. vii. 10. § Jud. v. 4. 20.

brews. David used it first against the Philistines,\* and explained it as the name of the God of the armies of Israel, that is, of one who fought for Israel. It must then be from the ancient history of the nation, and from its songs of victory, and here Moses, Deborah, and numerous Psalms give the full explanation. It is, in fact, the name of Israel's God, as the God of war, only from the circumstance, that at that ancient period it proceeded from the glorious manifestations upon Mount Sinai; from the lightnings and thunderings, and from the starry hosts mingling in the conflict, and thus suggesting its primitive import, Jehovah of hosts. From this, its meaning became greatly extended, until at length, like all such poetical designations of the divinity when much used, it expressed all the amplitude of the Divine magnificence and excellency. In the later writings of the Prophets, therefore, it can no longer be translated with propriety, the God of war; though this was its primitive import. It is in their use a conception of universal elevation and dignity of character; and to the God of Sabaoth, the Lord of hosts, all in heaven and earth pay homage. This is the proper and domestick origin of the name, and with the gods of the Sabaeans it had nothing to do. When, moreover, the Prophets describe the stars as the host of God, they do so because the universe is full of his majesty. Moses, Deborah, David, and the Psalms, are the successive steps, by which they were elevated to their sublime conception. As an example and proof of this, let us observe how David applies God's leading of the Israelites in the wilderness to an object, in which one would not expect to find it; the bringing of the ark to Mount Zion. He goes through the whole progress of God from mountain to mountain, from victory to victory, and the triumphal song of Deborah was plainly his model. The Psalm might be denominated the march of Jehovah, an expression used by Habakkuk, and derived from this Psalm.

\* 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

## **THE VICTORIOUS MARCH OF GOD.**

### **THE 68TH PSALM.**

**Our God exalts himself,  
And his enemies are scattered,  
They that hate him flee before him.**

**[The triumphal language of Moses, with which he addressed the cloudy pillar, when the march of the people proceeded.]**

**As smoke disperses, so they disperse,  
As wax is melted before the fire,  
So shall the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

**[Smoke and fire were the symbols of the Divine presence during the march of the Israelites.]**

**But the righteous are glad,  
They rejoice before God,  
They exult with joy.**

**[Because he accompanies them in their march. Here the introduction of the ode terminates, and a second chorus perhaps commences.]**

**2**

**Sing praise to God ! extol his name !  
Prepare his way, who marcheth in the desert,  
Extol him by his name JAH,  
And exult before him.  
The orphan's father, the widow's judge,  
Is God exalted in holiness.  
Our God ! to the desolate  
He gave a habitation,  
He brought to happiness those who were bound,  
And the rebellious dwelt in a dry land.**

[We may suppose the rebellious here to be Amalekites or Egyptians, who opposed themselves to the march of God. The desolate and those who were bound are the Israelites, whom he is leading out of bondage, and for whom he designs the rich land of Canaan. The other chorus now begins, and the march itself is described wholly in the language of Deborah.]

O God, when thou didst go forth,  
And wentest before thy people,  
When thou didst tread the desert,  
Then the earth did quake ;  
The heavens distilled in drops,  
When God looked forth upon them,  
This Sinai there before the face of God,  
The God of Israel.  
Thou, O God, didst send a gentle rain,  
Thou didst revive thy parched inheritance,  
Thy congregation can inhabit there.  
For thou by thy goodness, O God !  
Hast provided for the poor.

[To the last trait in the picture, the poet comes also through the description of Deborah. She painted the heavens as dropping, Sinai melting, in order to make a transition to the dropping of the clouds, which swelled the river Kishon and the Kadumim, and contributed to the victory. The gentle herdsman has here applied the heroic figure to a peaceful object, to make the wilderness a garden for the delightful habitation of the tribes of Israel. These, too, march onward, and war and victory follow.]

The Lord gave the signal for war,  
A host were messengers\* of victory.  
“ The Kings of the hosts flee, they flee,  
She that tarried at home divideth the spoil.  
Why wait ye there among the water pots ?  
The wings of the dove are covered with silver,

\* The noun in the original here is feminine.

Her feathers sparkle with yellow gold.  
 As the Almighty scattered the kings,  
 The snow descended upon Salmon."

These words were, perhaps, taken from an ancient triumphal song, which as usual, was also satirical. It related, obviously, to the victory of Deborah. In the Northern and woody part of Judæa their freedom was at that time recovered by Israel,\* the rainy season contributed to the victory, and mention was made also of the snow.† The news of the victory was intrusted to female messengers, because Deborah and Jael decided the battle, and it was not to be suffered, that the race in aftertimes should lose the memorial of Deborah, their heroic mother. The raillery respecting those who remained behind is plainly from her triumphal song, only here introduced with a little subtilty and refinement. She upbraided the cowardly tribes with preferring to hear the bleating of their flocks, rather than the cry of battle; here it is imputed to them, that

\* Isa. ix. 1—3. is perhaps a play upon this passage.

† The words "snow fell on Salmon," pertain to the taunting expression of the triumphal song, and need no critical alteration. The tribes, which remained inactive, were afraid of the severe winter weather, which Deborah found so conducive to her success. When even the less elevated Mount Salmon, lying in the Southern part of Judæa,‡ was covered with snow, how much more must it have been the case with the higher mountains of the North, whither the war-like expedition led them. This conclusion was sagaciously made by the Southern tribes, and they remained quietly with their doves. The spirit of the passage may be expressed as follows:

O ye who rest amid your folds,  
 What stays you loitering there,  
 To gaze upon your glossy doves  
 And mark their golden wings,  
 When God the Lord the nations smote?  
 And Canaan's heroes slew,  
 Then truly was a wintry day,  
 And snow on Salmon fell.

from timidity and an effeminate horror of war, they chose rather, in those raw and wintry days, to gaze with wonder upon the silvery wings and golden feathers of their doves, gleaming as they rise in flight, while Deborah, a woman, a dweller in the house, (a bee as the name signifies) is dividing the spoil. "The Lord gave the word," means he gave command for the war, he roused up heroes and so the messengers of victory.

Next follows the march of Jehovah upon the mountains. He descended upon the diminutive Zion, and how many more beautiful and more fruitful mountains were there, that were desirous of this honour. The fertile Bashan he had passed by, and here that mountain, which was one of the greatest in the land of Israel, draws the attention of the poet, and becomes the object of his song.

Thou mount of God, mount Bashan,  
The mountain range, mount Bashan,  
Why look with pride,\* ye pinnacled heights,  
On these, which God hath chosen to dwell in?  
Jehovah shall inhabit them  
Forever and ever.

[The account is equally balanced with praise and sarcasm. Bashan is named, because it was situated beyond Jordan, and God could not dwell there, because it was without the limits of the promised land.—Zion was recently gained by conquest, and the remnant of the Jebusites was perhaps still in Jerusalem. Then too God dwelt in the vicinity of his conquered foes—a circumstance, which gave occasion to the sublime picture of his victorious progress, after he moved forward from Sinai.]

\* More correctly "with envy." The Hebrew term, that occurs in the same form only in this passage, means to regard with envy. In this sense the passage may be translated thus:

Why look so enviously down ye mountain ranges,  
Upon this mount, which God has chose to dwell in,  
This expresses the *επιζετε* of Aquila and Theodotian.

J.

The chariots of God, a thousand thousand,  
And ten times ten thousand more.

The Lord comes forth in their midst,  
From the glory crowned summit of Sinai.

Thou didst raise the chariots aloft,  
Thou leddest forth thy captives with thee,  
Thou gavest men for thy triumphal gifts,  
And madest rebels now to dwell with thee.  
Jehovah, God.

Let God be praised, from day to night be praised,  
He layeth on our burdens, and giveth us help,  
He is our God, the God of our salvation,  
Jehovah the Lord hath the issues to death.

Surely God will wound the head of his enemies,  
The hairy scalp of him, who is against him.  
I will bring him, saith the Lord, from Bashan,  
I will bring him from the depths of the sea.  
Thy foot shall yet wade in their blood,  
Thy dogs lick the blood of thine enemies!—

But I have already given more perhaps, than was necessary for our present purpose. We see clearly what this difficult Psalm, abounding in proud and warlike sentiment, means by the triumphal gifts of God among men, and what the national God of the Israelites will do farther on the mountains, which he has newly conquered, that he will free them from those enemies, who now remain only as a kind of sin-offering. But we return to our subject and ask,

What meant that smoking Sinai?

What were these pillars of cloud and fire?

which gave occasion to such splendid imagery.

Respecting the fiery and cloudy pillars we need not be greatly at a loss. It was the sacred fire, which, as was customary in similar cases in those regions, was carried before the host, and served both as a signal for breaking up the encampments and renewing the march, and as a guide in their journeying. When the Israelites went out of Egypt it followed and stood

between them and the Egyptians. I remember to have read even in some Pagan writer, what originated probably in a misconception of this circumstance, that the flying people placed between them and their pursuers objects of religious veneration, I think sacred animals, which the Egyptians dared not approach. It is in the Exodus of the children of Israel, that those cloudy and fiery pillars first occur, and they are at once accompanied with miraculous effects, which still followed them throughout the journey.\* When the host were encamped, it stood before the door of the sanctuary, before the tent of the leader, and responses were given by it. When the host moved their camp, it went before as their guide. They continue to appear, so long as the Israelites were in the desert, but when they arrived in Canaan the Ark of the Covenant preceded, and showed the way, and these pillars are no longer mentioned. In short the phænomenon was a symbol of the Divinity, though with the Israelites not a mere symbol, but a presence, which produced marvellous and sometimes fearful effects. The two phænomena admit of being so naturally identified, that I see not why they should be considered as different. In the one symbol God would accompany Israel, and be their guide. This was the angel of his presence that is the herald and index of his peculiar presence and superintendence, and all this was included under the pillar of fire. By day it appeared as smoke, in the night as flame. Before it was the most revered seat of judgment, the highest tribunal. If Moses and Aaron were safe no where else, they were yet safe here, and the fire of God avenged them in a way that was manifest to the sense. When the journey was ended, the memorial of it was perhaps placed in the holy of holies, and for some time preserved; and hence the Jewish fable respecting the perpetual cloud of smoke between the cherubim. Nothing is more natural and accordant with history, than this

\* Ex, xiv. 19, 20, xxxiii. 9—11. Num, ix, 15—23,



explanation. It denies no miracle and only shows the medium, by which God wrought miracles, since this must be the angel of his presence, or, as Habakkuk calls it, the veil of his presence.

The splendid appearances on mount Sinai had very possibly similar natural causes, pertaining to the time and place, in which they were exhibited, for God works no miracles except through the instrumentality of natural powers. The extraordinary splendour, in which the sandy deserts of Arabia sometimes appear, the smoke, in which the mountains are veiled, the thunders, which are multiplied and fearfully reverberated among their towering cliffs, those and perhaps other terrific and magnificent phænomena of nature God on this occasion combined together, as the symbols and manifestations of his presence. Whoever would deny the miraculous character of the phænomena, must make the description of Moses a fable. Nor are they less so from the fact, that this region of fearful desolation is always fruitful in strange and startling phænomena.

Finally the passage through the Red Sea with the circumstances described as attending it was certainly a marvellous but not an impossible rescue. Probably Moses, when he received his commission, intended to direct his course over the isthmus. The Israelites could not moreover have been much below it, and they probably passed by Suez somewhat farther South, than the route which the caravans now take. Now though the gulf then extended according to remaining traces of it higher up than now, yet it was so wide as readily to account for the result. Losing the route in the darkness of the night, confounded by a tempest of rain and a storm of wind, and panick struck, the whole host of Egyptians might well fall into disorder, and lose themselves beyond the possibility of escape, whether falling into the deeper bays of the sea, or from the higher incursion of the driving and overwhelming flood. Nor is the passage here so broad, that it would be im-

possible for the Israelites to accomplish it in a single night. All the doubts, which have recently been accumulated respecting the matter, are overstrained. The ancient monuments of the Israelites, the feast which was established as a memorial of this passage over the sea, the triumphal song of Moses, and the numerous exhortations, which he enforced upon the assembled Israelites by a reference to it, show clearly enough, that their deliverance was at all events attended with very remarkable and terrifick circumstances, which Moses has described too in a manner perfectly natural, and accordant with the local character and relations of the place.

Would that our devotional songs, in which reference is made to this event had more resemblance to the Hebrew! These do not repeat it, though it was to them a national blessing, and the very ground of their national existence, in endless litanies, as we often do, but adapt the ancient event to new occurrences, combine it intimately with their subject, and sing it, if I may be allowed the expression, in a business like manner. Thus Deborah, and thus also several fine Psalms and passages in the Prophets. Let us now read for an example one of the most touching poems of the Hebrews, in which the boldest triumphal picture of the old world terminates in the most affecting elegy.

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#### THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK THE PROPHET.

O Jehovah, I have heard the rumour of thee ;  
And tremble with fear ;\*

\* The rumour, which the Prophet heard, was the tradition of the marvellous events of ancient times, and the predictions of what was then to take place. Once God strove for his people, now he would forsake them, and give them over to their enemies. Both of these are enlarged upon in the piece, and the Prophet longs to see the purpose of God in this sad catastrophe. This is what is expressed in the petition, " show thy work, make known with the progress of years what thou hast purposed, and in thy present severe counsels call to mind thine ancient miracles of goodness to this people.

With coming years, Jehovah, show thy work,\*  
 As years revolve make known,  
 In wrath remember mercy.

When God came on from Teman,  
 The high and holy one from Mount Paran,  
 His glory covered the heavens,  
 The earth was full of his praise.

His brightness was like the sun,  
 Out from his hand the rays shot forth,  
 And this was but the veil of his might.

Before him went the pestilence,  
 Birds of prey flew forth at his feet.  
 He stood, the earth was moved, †  
 He looked; and nations were scattered abroad,  
 The everlasting mountains were trod to dust,  
 The perpetual hills did bow themselves,  
 When he marched forth of old.‡

The huts of Cushan I saw in affliction,||  
 The tents of Midian vanished away.

Was Jehovah angry with the rivers?  
 Was the blast of thy breath at the waves?

\* The parallelism seems to require, this of the common reading, "revive thy work." Perhaps the poet had in his thoughts, Ps. xc. 13—17. and then the haste, and the calling for his work to be manifested is not unsuited to the context. The poet was desirous of seeing the approaching developments, and was admonished, chapter ii. 3. 4. to wait with patience. Here, then, he prays, as Moses did, that God would revive and carry forward his work.

† Several translations give this sense, and the parallelism obviously requires it. The nations flee away at the violent shaking of the earth.

‡ The "goings forth of old are" from the 68th Psalm, which gives to this often misapprehended expression the most intelligible sense. It is the march of God in ancient times, his stepping from mountain to mountain, (Sinai, Seir, Paran, Bashan) which so many ancient triumphal songs, and this elegy also describe.

|| They labour as it were under affliction. They strip off the coverings of their tents, so that a whole encampment of Nomades disappears in a few moments.

Was thy wrath against the sea ?\*  
 For thou didst mount upon thy war-chariot,  
 And ride with horses, thou God of salvation,  
 Thou drewest forth thy bow,  
 Multiplying sevenfold thine arrows.†  
 And the streams cleft asunder the land.  
 The mountains saw thee and trembled,

\* The peculiar turn of this question shows the alarm of the speaker, and gives a sublime movement to the ode. Several Psalms interrupt the narrative by such unexpected questions, as Ps. cxiv. 5. 6. and others, a striking peculiarity in the style of Oriental poetry.

† This line, which is a crux criticorum, only becomes intelligible in the sense, which I have given. But if we adopt this, what is the meaning of "word"? If we translate the passage—

Thou drewest forth thy bow,  
 The arrows of the commander were satiate with blood,

still to every reader of nice discernment, the connexion will appear harsh. The fact here assumed, that God is so suddenly called the "word," while through the whole ode he does not speak as an inactive commander, but is himself active as a warrior, that his arrows are already satiate with blood, while in the progress of the description this is first mentioned afterwards in verse 13th, all this renders this construction unnatural. I have, therefore, by a very simple construction read this word as a participle. That it often means "to make manifold" is well known, and thus, this difficult passage, seems to me, to be explained in the simplest way, and very finely in accordance with the scope of the imagery. The multiplying of the lightnings as glittering arrows is an image sufficiently known from the 18th Psalm, and this is followed by the Prophet in this passage.

But how comes it, that now, when God draws out his arrows with his bow, the rivers also rush through the land? If the reader proceeds farther on, he will see that a universal shuddering and alarm of nature is described, such as we remark before a tempest. It is as if all things felt the presence and immediate vicinity of the Creator. The river rolls on more rapidly, and as here the floods sound louder, the heights lift up their hands in expectation. There is no doubt, that all these figures refer to the Red Sea, to Jordan, to Sinai, and to the times of Joshua and Debo,

The overflowing waters fled away,

The deep uttered its voice.

The heights lift up their hands.

The sun and moon stood still in their course,\*

At the dazzling light of thine arrows flying,

At the lightning glance of thy spear.

Thou marchedst on in anger through the land,†

And trampledst upon the nations in thy wrath.

rah, when the rivers either shrunk back or overflowed; but all are combined into one picture, and hence, to follow out chronologically and historically, every minute feature is incorrect. It is plainly a continuous representation of a coming warrior, and of his deeds in battle. The image of the alarmed and troubled waters, which are sensible of the nearness of God, is derived from the majestick 77th Psalm v. 17—21. whose images Habakkuk has in several passages adopted and enlarged.

\* The image of the sun and moon are taken from both the history of Joshua and the song of Deborah combined together. In the former they stand still with astonishment, while God is engaged in battle; in the latter courses are ascribed to them. Should not the same Hebrew word, which Deborah uses, have stood here also, putting it in the singular only as the common reading is? The Septuagint seems to have read thus; since it translates *ἐν τῇ ταῖς αὐτῇς* just as in Judges v. 20. and the picture thereby becomes beautiful, complete, and full of action. They stand still with astonishment in the midst of their course, and upon the smooth path, which they are ever travelling. They see the glance of his lightnings, and are, as it were, ashamed, and thrown in the shade.

† The picture is progressive. God does not here first go forth upon the land. The first step of his progress was already described in the 6th verse. Here he is proceeding onward and trampling upon nations at every step. The poet advances also with the progress of the national history, and comes down to the kings, especially the age of David, as the 13th verse clearly shows. Hence, too, the images in the succeeding verses are from the triumphal songs of David. The 13th and 14th are obviously from Ps. lxxviii. 22. and Ps. cx. 6. and other passages, since David often uses the peculiar expression, "to wound or divide asunder the head."

For thou wentest forth to aid thy people,  
To bring salvation to thine anointed.

Thou didst smite the top from the house of the wicked\*  
And lay bare the foundation even to the rock,  
Thou piercedst the head of the leader of their ranks,†  
They were rushing as a storm to disperse me,  
Exulting as if to devour the oppressed,  
Like the wild beast in his covert.  
Then did thine horses tread upon the sea,  
They came upon the swelling floods.‡

\* The figure is taken from a house or temple, whose summit being dashed in pieces, it will be made bare and fall to ruins even to the foundation stone, which is laid upon a rock. That the word "head" is often thus used, especially in the Psalms, I need not show. The dilapidation of the house means, according to Oriental custom, the ruin of the whole family. It need not be asked to what enemies of David the poet had reference in this passage. The images are here introduced into the picture in their general application. The particular circumstances of the more ancient times, did not belong to the purpose of the writer.

† Various conjectures have been made respecting the original word here. Its first meaning, as it seems to me, is *ranks*, families, or members of families divided off, as its radical form signifies. In the song of Deborah (Jud. v. 7.), it is either villages, or assemblages from villages out of their districts, in short, orders. Here there were regular ranks of enemies, who according to the following verse, came on like a tempest, to scatter a defenceless people and divide the spoil. The Greek translation gives the collective form, leaders of such ranks or divisions (*κεφαλὰς δυναστιῶν*), as names of dignity are used in all languages. I have used some circumlocution in translating the word, because by this means, the succeeding image becomes more clear, and when compared with chap. i. 9. will need, I think, no farther elucidation.

‡ To bring them aid, that is, as the 8th and 12th verses show. The picture ends as it began, which is a striking beauty, since it gives unity to the whole view. As well in this part as in the whole economy of the ode, this poem is beautifully filled up.

When I heard this my heart trembled,\*  
 My lips quivered at the voice.  
 A shuddering ran through my bones,  
 And my feet were tottering.  
 Yet must I rest until the day of calamity,†  
 When the destroying nation cometh upon us.  
 Then shall the fig-tree not bloom,  
 And the vines shall give no fruit.  
 The hope of the olive tree shall fail,  
 The fields shall yield no bread,  
 The flock shall be cut off from the fold,  
 And no herd shall be in the stall.  
 Yet will I be confident in Jehovah,‡

\* Now another division of the ode commences, which again refers back to the beginning, verse 1st. The poet has heard from the ancient times all the wonders, which God wrought for Israel, and now sees other times no less fearful approaching. This makes the plan of the ode apparently incomprehensible and contradictory, as well as the feelings expressed in it. The preceding chapters are the best commentary upon it, especially chap. i. 1. 2. 12—14. chap. ii. 1—4.

† The leading word here is explained by the history of the Prophet, chap. ii, 1—4. He was directed by God to remain tranquil; he must wait for the time. This he now calls "resting and waiting for the day of calamity," when the nation invaded them, which he described in chap. 1st. He does not here speak of a going up to Chaldæa, but of a coming of the Chaldæans; as the following verse clearly shows. The following lines describe the entire desolation of the country, by the Chaldees.

‡ Here the ode draws to a conclusion. Dark and discouraging as it is around him, the Prophet yet remains true to the word of his God, (Chap. ii. 1—4.) he gives himself up to him, and leaps with joy in the name of his whole nation. It must, and will have a good result for them, though the Prophet does not yet see, and though he so strongly desires to see it, as the leading subject of his prophecy. (See Chap. i. 2. 3. 12—17. Chap. ii. 1—4. Chap. iii. 2.). The plan of the whole book is no less a beautiful whole, than this ode by itself, which I might justly call the crown of the Hebrew lyric Poetry. That in the last verse there is a reference to Ps. xviii. 34. and Deut. xxxiii. 29. I need not show. David applied the last mentioned passage to himself, and the Prophet refers it to the whole nation. It will yet, once more ascend upon its ancient heights, the scenes

And exult in the God of my salvation,  
 Jehovah God is my strength,  
 He will make me to leap as the hart,  
 And to tread again upon my high places.

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## APPENDIX.\*

Of the miracles in the Journeying of the Israelites, and the giving of the Mosaick law.

“ Must not the whole description of this march through the Arabian deserts be a sort of epick poem of later date, and produced at a period, when the truth of history was already clothed in the marvels of fiction ?” So far as my purpose is concerned it would make no difference though it were even so : for still this history remains the basis of Hebrew legislation and poetry. But what ground have we to believe this ? Let one read the description impartially, and observe its entire simplicity, its local references, its precise correspondence and propriety in the circumstances of time and place. Every new book of travels has confirmed or illustrated its local truth, and even to the present day the traditions of the neighbouring nations and races are full of this ancient history. I am aware, that the Mohammedan religion has in a peculiar manner revived these traditions ; it however, only revived and built upon them, for they were before already there. The lonely desert

of victory and leap upon them like a hart. Judæa was a mountainous country, and hence, of the Chaldæans also, (ver. 16.) the word ‘high places,’ is used. The conclusion of the ode is patriotick, beautiful, and dignified. All the feelings and fortunes of his people, prosperity and adversity, the poet experiences in his own breast.

\* This short treatise and a metrical paraphrase of the prayer of Habakkuk, are found among Herder’s manuscripts, and were inserted here by the first editor, J. G. Mueller. J.



~~seems~~ to be designed for the purpose, that in it this history might survive, as well in the memorials of nature, as in the traditions of the people.

If a poetical aim were discoverable in the narrative of Moses as in that of Homer, and if we saw in it events combined and adorned for the accomplishment of this aim, while at the same time, it was incompatible with the truth of nature ; then it might be seen distinctly in the Arabian desert, as well as on the plains of Troy, where fiction begins and history ends. The fiction would show itself by a reference to the purpose, to which it was directed.

Now, in Moses, nothing of this sort is perceivable. The description of the passage of the Red Sea, does not grow out of the ode, that was sung for its celebration, but obviously precedes it, as a perfectly artless geographical description. The giving of the law on Mount Sinai is told in a style of simple narrative. Whatever is sublime and terrific in it belongs to the subject, not to the language. So it is with the most fearful as well as the agreeable incidents of the journey. They fall as artlessly into the general train of events, and the course of the narrative, as does the long description of the arrangements of the tabernacle, of the laws, the sacred rites and vestments, all of which are certainly historical monuments of that age.

Why then should we give credence to the one and not to the other ? Why must we insist that all things shall proceed in every age, as they do in our own ? There a system of doctrine and legislation was to be established, which has extended its power over nations and centuries. Could Moses, unaided, with all his Egyptian wisdom, or even with the added wisdom of his Levites, accomplish this ? Could he do it against the opposition of some hundred thousand stiff-necked and rebellious men ? And how could he sustain them so long in the desert ? Let him who has any doubts here give a plan to show how it might be done ; but let the whole be placed between

Sinai and Paran, and suited to that age and to the same people.

Yet nobody requires us on the authority of Moses : 1. to believe fables, of which the history knows nothing, and which the later Rabbins have invented, respecting the manna, the cloudy pillars, the angels by whose ministration the law was given, &c. either from childish interpretations or for moral purposes. Rather,

2. Since there is one God, the Lord of nature, and of these miraculous phænomena, all these must have taken place and are to be explained through the instrumentality of natural causes. Theophrastus, Pliny and others have also spoken of the manna, as this far more ancient description does, and the account is perfectly in accordance with the knowledge and views of nature, which pertained to that age. The atmospherick phænomena of the country among the mountains of Arabia are alike known. Of the stifling wind Simoom, the avenging messenger of the Lord, the phænomena of the East wind, in which all objects appear magnified, and the sandy desert looks like a sea of fire, the same may be said. It is a fearful solitude of nature, formed as it were, for producing the sublime impressions of fear and implicit obedience.

3. But so far as discoveries have yet been made, and have come within my own knowledge, no miracle of Israelitish history can be fully explained on these principles. There are no oak forests in those regions, from the manna of which so great a multitude could have subsisted in its wanderings, and the Israelites had as much sense as we have to consider, that they had not known in Egypt what was a natural thunder storm.

4. Finally, it is remarkable that the place of all these miraculous events lay out of the limits of Canaan; and had, therefore, no influence on the observance of the law. Sinai was not in Canaan, and in danger from some supposed sacredness of the place of being revered, as the dwelling place of God. They saw the tempests sweep over, and on them the Lord of the tempest; but in Canaan he rested in his career

upon no mountain summit. The history remained what it was; ancient history, and if an Elijah sometimes fled thither to console and strengthen himself by the fortunes of Moses, yet the place, as an object of popular superstition, was not laid down in the map of Moses. It was never sent to for the purpose of obtaining oracular responses, and on the same ground the places consecrated in the history of the Patriarchs, Mamre, Luz, Bethel, could never become places of idolatrous worship. When Bethel from political causes was becoming such, the Prophet changed its name Bethel, (house of God) into Beth-aven (house of idolatry). It must, however, be admitted in regard to the marvellous and supernatural in the Hebrew legislation, that it was perverted to superstitious uses, which for centuries held the minds of the people in fetters, though it did not differ in this respect from other religions.

NOTE. I have ventured to omit here the metrical paraphrase of the Prayer of Habakkuk mentioned in a previous note. TR.

#### IV.

### INSTITUTIONS OF MOSES.

**Of the name Jehovah ; what it involved ; and how far its import was unfolded. The 90th and 102d Psalms. Pure and uncorrupted ideas of God, of moral truths, and of practical wisdom in the poetry of the Hebrews. Legislation of Moses.**

1. The national freedom and equality established by it. National assemblies at their festivals. Songs which they sung with national pride and exultation.
2. Jehovah was enthroned upon the laws alone. National songs respecting this with an application even to oppressors and unjust judges. The laws were compared with the ordinances of God in nature. An ode to this effect.
3. Office and dignity of the tribes set apart to his service. Of the light and law of rectitude upon the breast of the high priest. Images drawn from the attire of the priests in Hebrew poetry. They are symbols of a flourishing state. Application of them to kings and to heavenly ministers.
4. Origin and purpose of sacrifices. Moral use of them in poetry. Examples in several Psalms.

General remarks on the language derived from the laws of Moses respecting diseases and vices, and on particular parts of the religious service and symbolical observances. The institution of the sabbath has preserved for us all that remains of their ancient history and poetry. Images drawn from it of a perpetual sabbath and the year of jubilee. The Tabernacle of Moses a symbolical representation.

Jehovah was the name which Moses impressed upon his people as the name of the God of their fathers. It expressed a pure and sublime conception,\* which imported the immovableness and truth of God, his eternity, his unchangeableness and his eternal worth and glory. This fundamental concep-

It confessedly involved the three relations of time, "I was, I am, I shall be," or as God himself says, "I am in that I am."

tion in the law of Moses is denominated the holiness of the Lord,\* an expression, for which I know no synonym in the German language. Not only were all images and representations of God drawn from the works of creation prohibited, but this sacred name was the occasion for unfolding the highest attributes and perfections of the Godhead, which were to serve as an eternal and immutable basis for the reason and religion of man. It is not intended by this to say, that Moses himself unfolded all these perfections. To him, the lawgiver of the Israelites, God must appear and be represented more especially as the guardian God of Israel, and on this conception are grounded many forcible and striking passages of his admonitions and of his songs. But what he as a lawgiver could not do, was done afterwards by the wise men and poets of Israel. Was Jehovah the one only God, the creator of the world, so was he also the God of all nations, and of all generations of men, and for the unfolding of this rich and fruitful gem these needed but time, unbiassed thought, and the calm Spirit of God. It is not here the question, whether other nations have also unfolded the same ideas. For why need we be envious, and refuse to give the Persians, Hindoos, Celts or whomsoever it may be, credit each in their proper measure for the degree, in which they have preserved and advanced the most ancient religion of the earth. It is enough, that in that age, and in that part of the world, among Egyptians, Canaanites, and the uncultivated tribes of Arabia, Moses was alone in his advancement. He sought out the religion of the Patriarchs, the ancestors of his race, and what he derived from Egypt in the outward form and costume of his institutions and laws was not permitted to obscure the pure light of that revelation, which was given him in the burning bush of the Arabian desert. Thus with the progress of time were formed those sublime ideas, which we find in the Psalms and Prophets.

\*The holiness of the Lord is his highest peculiarity, in which he has none like him,

To illustrate this we may begin with the ode, which is ascribed to Moses himself as its author. It unfolds the name Jehovah, that is, the immutable truth, the eternal and absolute immobility and constancy of the creator of the world.

### A SONG OF MOSES, THE MAN OF GOD.

#### THE 90th PSALM.

O Lord ! Thou alone art our steadfastness  
From generation to generation !\*

Before the mountains were generated,  
Or the earth and the world upheaved them,  
From eternity to eternity thou art God. †

Thou lettest man return to the dust,  
And sayest, return, ye generations of men.  
For a thousand years are in thy sight  
But as yesterday when it is past,  
As a watch of the night.

Thou lettest them pass away.  
There are they in a dead sleep,  
In the morning they were as the green grass,  
In the morning it was green and flourishing,  
In the evening it was parched and dried up.

So thou didst consume us by thy breath,  
The blast of thine anger drives us away.  
Thou placedst our iniquities before thee,  
Our secret sins came to light  
Before thy view.

Therefore have our days passed away,  
By thy sentence upon us ; ‡  
We waste our years away,  
Like an idle tale.

The days of our life are seventy years,  
And if in its strength they be four score years,

\*How sublime an idea ! We are but in appearance, mere fleeting shadows upon the earth. Only in God is our steadfastness. He is our true being, whom Moses so often calls a rock.

†In all past ages, Thou, Lord, hast been.

‡Gen. vi. 5 or the decree of God, that all the Israelites should perish in the desert.

Yet its whole extent is toil and pain,  
It is quickly past, and we are gone.

If the name Jehovah had occasioned the productions only of the sublime exposition in Isaiah from the 40th chapter onward, we should have abundant cause to bless the memory and the religion of Moses.

There is no attribute, no perfection of God, which did not find its most simple and powerful expression in the Psalms and Prophets, and for the most part these sublime developments of thought are drawn from the name Jehovah, which is in fact the ground of all natural theology. Never can I read without emotion the Psalm\* of that suppliant, who on account of his great age, could not hope to witness the fulfilment of his wishes respecting Jerusalem and his people. He fails and sinks in the midst of his way, with his eye directed to the promise, but God the promiser fails not, and another generation will live to witness its accomplishment, for God is Jehovah.

My days decline as a shadow,  
And I am withered like grass,  
But thou, O Jehovah, reignest forever,  
Thy name endureth from age to age.  
Therefore for generations to come it is written,  
A nation yet unborn shall praise the Lord.  
He will look down from his holy heights,  
From heaven will Jehovah look upon the earth,  
And hear the groaning of the prisoners,  
And deliver those that are condemned to death.  
Then shall they praise in Zion the might of Jehovah,  
Then shall his praise be sounded in Jerusalem;  
When the people shall be gathered together,  
And kingdoms for the service of Jehovah.  
My strength indeed fails, ere I attain it,  
And my days are shortend.  
I said also; my God, take me not away  
In the midst of my life.—

Ps. 102.

Yet thy years go on from age to age,  
 Thou it is, who of old hast founded the world,  
 The heavens also are the work of thy hands,  
 They too perish, but thou abidest,  
 They become old like a garment,  
 As a garment thou layest them aside,  
 And new heavens are brought forth.  
 But thou art the same,  
 And thy years have no end.  
 The children of thy servants also shall continue,  
 And their generations shall flourish before thee.

Thus are always the most sublime attributes of God intimately associated with the most tender sensibilities of human nature. The omniscience, the omnipresence, the infinite wisdom, the particular care and providence of God are represented in the Psalms and Prophets with such a sense of reality and inwardness, that one cannot escape the consciousness of being under the immediate eye of God. If the doctrines of the purest Theism were to be expressed in the strongest terms, the language should be taken from the Old Testament.

He that hath made the eye, shall he not see?  
 He that hath planted the ear, shall he not hear?  
 Consider yet, ye brutish among the people,  
 Ye senseless fools, when will ye be wise?

Can any thing more to the purpose, even in our own day, be said against that class of philosophers, who deny the evidences of design in nature? All, which they ascribe to an abstract and lifeless nature, the heathen idolaters referred to their false Gods, and what the Prophets urge against the one holds equally against the other. The purer philosophy and theology any poetry contains, the more nearly, not only in its general sentiments, but even in its expressions, will it approach to the poetry of the Old Testament.

Nearly the same thing is true also in regard the doctrines of morality, only we must not treat of these in the sense, in



which they were practised by the people, but as they ought to be practised. Neither must we look for these in the passages, in which they are limited by the particular aims of the political lawgiver, or the teacher of worldly prudence, but where they are uttered by the sage and the poet. In his positive institutions Moses could only speak in terms suited to his age, to his people, and to their apprehension, and it would be folly to demand of him more than this. Yet the law, which he gave them, was too spiritual and too good for the Israelites, since they had neither power nor inclination to observe it. But where Moses speaks as a monitor and teacher of the people, especially in his last appeal to them, what sublime sentiments does he introduce!

Understand, O Israel,  
 Jehovah, thy God, is one Jehovah,  
 And thou shalt love Jehovah thy God,  
 With all thy heart,  
 With all thy soul,  
 And with all thy strength!  
 —The word, that I command thee this day,  
 Is not a dark saying, and far from thee,  
 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say,  
 Who shall ascend and bring it down for us;  
 Nor beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say,  
 Who shall go over the sea for us,  
 And bring it to us, and cause us to hear,  
 That we may understand and do it.  
 For the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and heart,  
 That thou mayest do it!\*

David in his personal conduct may be as he will; he may even in many of his Psalms appear selfish and ambitious of fame, cruel and misanthropick, yet in the presence of Jehovah he dares not boast himself of any other than praiseworthy qualities, of strict integrity, and openness of heart. All those

\* Deut. vi. 4. xxx. 11.

**Psalm**s of his, which contain general instruction, and still more those of Asaph and of an anonymous author are full of the purest doctrines of morality. The Proverbs of Solomon contain much of the court-morality of the Orientals, for they teach strictly speaking the maxims of prudence rather than the abstract principles of morality. Yet, even in them, there is much of pure gold, and they lay the foundation of all the maxims of life in the fear of Jehovah. The Prophets in the fulness and clearness of their teachings go far before most of the Gnomick poets of the Greeks, and the book of Sirach is a blooming garden, full of instruction and precept, of imagery also and of parables and descriptive representations. In short, it may be said, of the law of Moses, in the language of this book, "Wisdom has flown from it as Pishon, as Tigris, as the Euphrates and the Nile, when it overflows and waters the land."

The Legislation of Moses had for its purpose the formation of a free people, subject to none but the law ; and that no one might deprive them of their liberty God was himself the giver of the law, its guardian, and the king of his people. He dwelt in the midst of them and the much abused word, " temple," properly designated a house for the book of the law, over which God was himself the guardian. The whole people constituted a priestly kingdom ; and every one was a servant of the same king and of his law. " Thou shalt be to me a priestly kingdom," was the first principle, in which Moses comprehended the character of his legislation. If we would not call this a theocracy, we may denominate it a nomocracy. But in reference to the poetry, that grew out of it, and in accordance with the truth of those ancient times and their history, the term theocracy, is far more expressive and beautiful. All poetry, which related to the political organization, and the service of God, was theocratic. Let us consider what constituted its specific character,

First; *The honours of the tribes, equality of national rights, and liberty.* No provision was made for a king in the legislation of Moses; God and his law were alone king. All the tribes were one people, descendants of the patriarchs, from whom they had received as an inheritance their knowledge of God, and with it the rights of fraternal relationship and even of the priesthood, which, according to Egyptian notions, were the highest in rank. To this purpose was introduced the rite of circumcision, a distinction, which in Egypt was confined to the priesthood, and was here (though through the Romans and Gentile nations it has become a reproach) to be a national honour. All the tribes were ranged under their princes, and every family under its head, so that all the fraternal members were connected together, subject to the tribunal, which exercised jurisdiction over all. Three times in the year, at the great national festivals, there was a general assembling of the people. They came together not to hear sermons or mass for seven days, but to rejoice together in their community of privileges, and to feel that, as the people of God, they were one people. All their three great festivals were national, and associated with liberty. The passover was a memorial of the day which made them a free people; the feast of pentecost of the law, by which that freedom was confirmed; and the feast of tabernacles, of its enjoyment in their first simple dwellings and unrestrained family intercourse. All the festivals abounded in sacrificial feasts, in musick, songs and dances. The people of God in the presence of their invisible Lord, and before the tabernacle, in which his law was deposited, could not but be a rejoicing people. By these assemblages their national pride, that is, their delight in Jehovah, the fraternal relationship of the several tribes, who all had but one Jehovah, one invisible king, one law, one temple, were awakened and cherished, and by their social participation of the feast and song, the origin of the nation, the history and memorials of their patriarchs, were preserved, and remained al-

ways fresh in their minds. When we use the words, sacred feast, temple, festivals, Psalms, we either form no clear conception, or at least, a cold, cheerless and lifeless one, because we have ourselves no national festivals, and songs of public rejoicing, no temple associated with the glory of our fathers, no law for the universal security of our national freedom. Hence, the Psalms, which are filled with this spirit, are so often contemplated by us without emotion or sympathy. No people can have a national poetry, that has not objects of general pride and gratulation, in which all have a community of interest; much less, when nourished up in opposing sentiments and ideas, they combine contradictory conceptions with the words pertaining to Divine worship and things sacred, can they be expected to sympathize with the national feelings of others in a remote age? Hence the sad and mystical tone of commentators on the Psalms, a tone, which, if we forget the word Psalms and substitute national songs in its stead, is at once changed. If we consider the spirit of social union and friendship, that animates the national poetry and songs, when all ranks of free people come together mutually to excite and congratulate each other, in prosperity, in joy and in successful well-doing, or to condole with each other respecting national misfortunes, we shall find in most of the Psalms more beauty and interest.

Some, for example, are obviously songs of gratulation and joy, that they could now go up to Jerusalem to rejoice as a nation.

O come, let us sing unto Jehovah,\*  
 Make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.  
 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,  
 And make a joyful noise with Psalms.  
 For great is Jehovah our God,  
 A great king above all gods.  
 In his hand are the deep places of the earth,

\* Ps. xcvi.

The heights of the mountains are his also.  
His is the sea, which he created,  
The firm land his hands have formed.

Come let us worship and bow down,  
Let us kneel before Jehovah our maker,  
For he is our God, and we the people of his land,  
The flock, which he feedeth like a shepherd.  
To-day, if ye will hear his (the shepherd's) voice,  
Harden not your hearts, as at Meribah,  
At Massa in the desert.—

The application of an historical fact in the last lines, as well as the expression “to-day,” which is often sadly misinterpreted and misapplied, derive their animation from the living voice, by which a nation is summoned together, and the festival proclaimed, from which none had a right to be absent.

a/ Considered in reference to this, every word is full of opposite meaning. The same, also, may be said of the 100th and other Psalms. In others we find expressed the joy of those, who at such national assemblies went up in procession to the temple, and here and there a reference to their journey thither.\*

How beautiful are thy tents, Jehovah Sabaoth,  
My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of Jehovah.  
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.  
As the bird, that hath found her house,  
The swallow her nest, where she left her young,  
So look I upon thy altar, Jehovah Sabaoth,  
My king and my God.

Blessed are they, that abide in thy house,  
They sing continually thy praise,  
Blessed is he that fixeth his heart upon thee,  
And goeth joyfully to thee in thy ways.†  
They go through the thirsty valley of Baca.

\* Ps. lxxxiv.

† Obviously the publick roads to Jerusalem, which at that time would be full of travellers. “The trodden ways are in their hearts, means, according to a well known idiom, they delight in them, go in them gladly.

And find it abounding in water.\*  
 Blessed also is he, that guideth them.†  
 They go with ever increasing strength,‡  
 Till they behold in Zion the God of Gods.  
 Jehovah, God of Sabaoth!  
 Hear my prayer!  
 Give ear, O God of Jacob!  
 Behold, O God our shield,  
 And look upon the face of thine anointed.  
 A day in thy courts  
 Is better than a thousand.  
 I would rather stand at the threshold of my God,  
 Than dwell in the tents of the prodigal.||  
 For Jehovah God is our sun and shield,  
 Jehovah assures to us grace and glory,  
 No good will he withhold from the upright.  
 Blessed, O Jehovah Sabaoth!  
 Is the man, that trusteth in thee.§

The first sadly misinterpreted part of this Psalm cannot be better illustrated (*absit invidia dicto!*) than by the example of those, who make pilgrimages to Mecca. As with them the inward emotion and interest increase, the nearer, in passing through the desert, they approach to the sacred spot, as they fall into an ecstasy, when they behold the glittering towers of

\* I adopt the reading, here which means to drink, and thus from the antithesis between this and Baca the sense becomes more beautiful and natural. They forget their thirst, and are animated by their approach to Jerusalem, for they see the sanctuary, the end of their journey. That they are still journeying, appears from the 8th verse which follows.

† This is plainly the Caravanbaschi or Ghafir, as the Pilgrims to Mecca denominate him.

‡ Though weary and fainting in the dry valleys about Jerusalem.

|| The word here has an extensive sense including that of enemy, villain, oppressor, robber, and prodigal.

§ That is, who is faithful and true, as our law books say. This word embraces in the Psalms the duties of a subject towards God, as the previous verses celebrate the benefits conferred by God as a protector.

the Caaba, so here the march! to Jerusalem through the parched valleys is pursued with longing desire, and still increasing vigour and delight. These burning vales become to them, as it were, living fountains of water, for in Baca they already see the countenance of Jehovah.—The second part of the Psalm, also, is word for word, from the actual circumstances of the national worship at Jerusalem. There are here no far-fetched and mystical images. As here, in the time of David, prayer is offered for the king, so in other Psalms prosperity for the whole land is intreated, especially in the language adapted to the national assemblies.

I am glad, when they say to me,\*  
 Let us go into the house of Jehovah.  
 My feet stand within thy gates,  
 O Jerusalem!  
 Jerusalem is built a compact city,  
 House joins to house within it.†  
 Thither the tribes go up, the tribes of Jehovah,  
 To the memorial feast for Israel,  
 To praise the majesty of Jehovah.  
 There stand the thrones of judgment,  
 The thrones, which the king hath established.  
 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,  
 They shall prosper that love thee.  
 Peace be within thy walls,  
 And tranquility within thy palaces.  
 For my brethren and companions' sakes  
 I will say, peace be within thee,  
 Because of the temple of our God,  
 I will seek thy good.

The young inhabitant of the country, who had once seen Jerusalem and would gladly see it again, could not speak of

\* Ps. cxxii.

† As a countryman in going to the city among us would say,  
 Urbem, quam dicunt Romam, Meliboea, putavi  
 Stultus ego huic nostræ similem, &c.

it with more simplicity of feeling, than this song exhibits. Other Psalms express the wish for prosperity in general, others celebrate the intercourse of families and tribes, and still others praise the dignity of the priests, and the pomp of the religious ceremoniel. In calamitous times their songs have a tone of mourning and lamentation, in prosperous times of joyousness; and these national festivals in a word have produced a portion of the Psalms, in which a true publick spirit prevails. All which commence with "the Lord is king," are of this kind; most, also, of the thanksgiving and halelujah Psalms, some of the family of Korah, some of Asaph, and the most touching Psalm of David, "As the hart panteth!" expresses a longing after the temple of God, and was obviously adapted for such a national festival. It is the main point of the Psalm, that he cannot even now participate

In the voice of song and gratulation,

In the crowd of those, who dance at the temple of God.

Moses organized these national assemblies, and is therefore, also, the father of these lyrick effusions.

Second. The God of Israel was without a sensuous representation. In the most sacred place of his tabernacle was laid the book of the law, in an ark, and the Cherubim, as the symbols of the marvellous and the sacred, stood upon it. The space between them was regarded as the dwelling place of Jehovah, and thus he is often called, "Jehovah who dwelleth between the Cherubim." God, moreover, had no throne in the temple. The book of the law was his throne. He was its guardian and executor, and shielded it with the force of his authority.—The purpose aimed at, was of the noblest kind, and was nothing less, than to make the national system of worship one with the political constitution, and consecrate the law itself, as a league, a compact, a treaty of God with the nation. According to the spirit of the system, again, idolatrous images and sensuous representations of God could no more ex-



ist among the creations of their poets, than they could be suffered in the temple and sanctioned by the law. But poetry was on this account the more free to celebrate the praises of God, as the God of the nation ; and the giver of its laws ; and this it has in fact done. Many of the national songs celebrate the king, who dwelleth in darkness (so it was in the most holy place) but who hath established his throne in righteousness and judgment. They exhort all the magistrates of the land to administer justice in the name of God ; for only through the medium of his laws is God present, and efficiently working among his people.\*

Jehovah reigns ! the nations tremble before him !  
He is throned upon the Cherubim, the world is moved !  
The great Jehovah is in Zion,  
The lofty one above all the nations.

The king hath strength, who loveth judgment,  
Thou hast established ordinances,  
And maintained law and equity in Jacob.  
Exalt Jehovah our God,  
And bow down at his footstool,  
Before his sanctuary.

Moses and Aaron among his priests,  
And Samuel among them, that invoke his name,†  
They called upon Jehovah,  
And he answered them ;  
He spake to them from the clouds,  
And they observed his words,  
The laws and ordinances, which he gave,‡  
Jehovah our God, thou heardest them,

\* Ps. xcix.

† Who was not a priest. The distinction is here made, obviously, as it was presented to the senses in the service of the temple ; priests and laymen, servants and worshippers.

‡ This language relates to the pure national laws, and the institutions of the land ; to utter feelings of triumph respecting these is the spirit and scope of the ode.

**Thou didst favour them, and vindicate their work.\***

**Exalt ye Jehovah, our God,**

**Cast yourselves down before the holy mount,**

**Where our God, the lofty one, is enthroned.**

How spiritless is all this, when severed from its original connexions and relations ! But how apposite, when these praises are considered as the jubilant expressions of a free people, to be ruled only by the fixed and determinate laws of God.

**God stands in the congregation of his people,†**

**He judgeth among the gods of the earth.**

**How long will ye judge unjustly ?**

**And respect the person of the oppressor ?**

**Do justice to the poor and the orphan,**

**Give their right to the oppressed and needy,**

**Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.**

**They know not, neither do they understand,**

**They go on in their blindness.**

**Therefore the foundations of our land tremble,**

**I have said, ye are Gods,**

**All of you sons of the highest,**

**But like feeble men must ye die,**

**And together as one go down to the ground.‡**

**Lift up thyself, O God, and judge the land,**

**For all the tribes are thine inheritance.**

**Thus did poetry with patriotic spirit dare to reprove tyrants,**

**\* Thou didst stand by them, guard their institutions, aid them against their enemies, &c.**

**† Ps. lxxxii. God sat in judgment in the middle of the land, in the most holy place, where in doubtful cases the highest judge consulted him. He sat also in all the tribunals of the country, which were held only in his name. God alone was king and judge; and, even when there were kings in Israel, they could and must be regarded only as vicegerents of God, subject to the constitution of the country as their law.**

**‡ The 7th verse is placed in antithesis with the 6th in both its members. If they are so placed in contrast, Gods and men, all and one, the obscurity disappears.**

and present in the midst of them that king, in whose name alone they were the judges and princes of his people. The poet had only to recal to their minds the positive constitution of their country, and the 94th Psalm exhibits the same subject with still greater ardour. All those pieces, which celebrate God as king, (political songs celebrating the fundamental principles of the government), are so confident in regard to this, that they call on sea and land, nations and people, to confess, that the God of whom they sing, is alone an upright and just king ; that Judah alone has a form of government eternal like God, strong and impregnable like nature, for both are the work of one and the same God. It is the method of many Psalms to place side by side, the wonders of God in nature, and his ordinances among them, which they regard as alike marvellous. Very probably, the choirs alternated with each other in these enumerations, and, by combining together as one, the great and the small, they give to the movement of the whole dignity and stateliness.

1. 2. Praise ye Jehovah, \*

1. For it is good to sing praises to our God,
2. For pleasant and comely is the song of praise.

1. Jehovah buildeth up Jerusalem,†  
And assembleth the outcasts of Israel.  
He healeth the broken in heart,  
And bindeth up their wounds.
2. He reckoneth the number of the Stars,  
And calleth them by their names.  
Great is our Lord, and of great power,  
His understanding is infinite.

1. Jehovah raiseth up the oppressed,
2. And boweth the oppressor to the dust.
1. Sing to Jehovah in alternate choirs,

\*Ps. cxlvii.

† I do not mean to decide by the division of this psalm, that the two numbers of the parallelism were sung by two different choirs. By the numbers I have only indicated the general economy of the piece.

**2. Play to him upon the harp.**

**1. He covereth the heaven with clouds,  
He prepareth rain for the earth,  
He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains,  
He giveth to the beasts their food,  
To the young ravens, when they cry.**

**2. His delight is not in the strength of the horse,  
Nor his glory in him that runneth swiftly.  
Jehovah loveth them that fear him,  
And that trust in his goodness.**

**1. 2. Praise Jehovah, O Jerusalem !**

**Praise thy God, O Zion !  
For he strengtheneth the bars of thy gates,  
He blesseth thy children within thee.  
He giveth thee peace in thy borders,  
And filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.**

**1. He giveth his commandment to the earth,  
His word runneth very swiftly.  
He giveth snow like wool,  
He scattereth hoar-frost like ashes,  
He casteth down ice in masses,  
Who can stand before his cold ?**

**2. He uttereth his word, and they are melted,  
He causeth the wind to blow, and the waters flow.**

**1. 2. He showeth his word unto Jacob,  
His statutes and judgments unto Israel.  
He hath done so to no other nation,  
And they know not his ordinances.  
Praise ye Jehovah.**

Far as I am from introducing the artifices of dramatic representation into the psalms, it yet appears to me, that the alternation of parts is here pretty evident, though they may be otherwise divided. The bold combination of the wonders of nature with those of the state institutions is the soul of the whole.

Third. Jehovah, who reigned only by means of laws, had servants, who in every good regulation were to be the soul of his kingdom; interpreters and guardians of the constitution, and even its supreme executive; for they were the highest tri-

bunal in the land. They were moreover the regulators of the calendar, had charge of weights and measures in trade, were Judges respecting contagious diseases, and physicians. They executed contracts of property, arranged the festivals, according to which every thing else was regulated, summoned the people to the national assemblies, and marched with the sanctuary of the nation in war, to inspire the army with courage by their songs, trumpets and the presence of their God. The first servant of God, the high priest, was the first servant of righteousness.

His breast plate was called the breast plate of judgment, as among the Egyptians the presiding priest and judge carried before him the symbol of justice. The high priest however bore no symbol; but the names of the twelve tribes of his brethren, engraven upon precious stones, must rest upon his heart, and with them light and right,\* that is, the most perfect

\*That Urim and Thummim signifies the fullest, truest light, does not admit of a doubt, and as little can it be doubted, that the expression "Thou shalt make (set, give) the breastplate of judgment for a Urim and Thummim" means in the Hebrew, "Thou shalt make it the mark and insignia of the highest and truest judicial decision, in which no evasion, no doubt, can any longer avail." I do not attempt to decide how the oracle of God in the sanctuary answered the high priest, whether as it did Moses, by an audible voice, or by an inward guiding of his thoughts, such that when he entered with his question into this sacred place, he felt himself seized by a Divine influence, and inspired with Divine truth. It is enough that the high priest answered in the name of God; and to enquire of God by Urim and Thummim, means simply to enquire of the person, who bore the Urim and Thummim, and who, as the bearer of this, was qualified to answer, that is, *legitimo modo*, through the presiding judge. See Num. xxvii. 21. His answer too was confided in as an oracular decision, and we find at a later period the expression, even respecting human counsels, "when one enquired of him, it was as if he enquired of God." In short the Urim and Thummim was wisdom and truth, as of a Divine oracle, the clearest and most infallible decision. This Moses was to make the breast plate of judgment, that is, ordain this splendid attire, consecrate it, and adapt its form to this purpose. The case was the same with this, as with the attire of the

light, and the most unreserved expression of it, abide in his breast.

In the poetry of the Hebrews, the figurative images used to express the highest dignity were drawn from the attire of the priest, and especially of the high priest, because he was the first of the nation in rank, and of princely dignity by his consecration to God. Hence the costly magnificence of the age and country stood connected with him. The priests were clothed with righteousness and salvation,\* that is, as they were judges and sacred persons, guardians and administrators of the institutions of the country, on which the happiness of the nation depended, so their official attire was a symbol of both justice, the general order of society, and of the well being of the nation and Jehovah's delight in it. From this idea originated the figurative expressions in Moses, the Prophets, and Psalms, which to us appear so strange, and to scoffers were ridiculous, because we neither possess nor feel any sympathy with such sacred symbols, as were there an object of the highest reverence to a whole people. Our priests are clothed rather with contempt, and their attire is the sackcloth of poverty. The term "established religion" is in many countries so much a term of reproach and contempt, that when, in con-

head of the high priest, and the inscription upon his forehead "holiness to the Lord." This indicated his regal dignity, as standing in the place of God, that his office and duty, as the presiding judge, to bear the whole people upon his heart, to bring them in remembrance before God, and to be, as it were, a mediator between God and his people. This he was by virtue of his office, by enquiring of God in doubtful cases, and by deciding according to the voice of God in his name. So long as Moses lived, he enquired of Jehovah. When he was no more, who should enquire of him but the highest judge. He did so by right of office, and therefore dared never appear before Jehovah without his breast plate of judgment. More than this the Urim and Thummim certainly was not; nor could it be two dice, since answers were given more difficult and circumstantial, than it was possible for dice to give.

\*Ps. cxxxii. 9. 16.

nexion with entirely different establishments and times, we read the word "priests," even the noblest imagery becomes debased and belittled. There the ruin of the country could not be more affectingly and vividly represented to the people, than by saying, "The sanctuary is profaned, the crown of the Divine majesty is fallen from the head of the high priest, the priests go in sackcloth and mourn." Their defilement was the defilement of the nation; their adorning the emblem of general order and happiness.

I exceedingly rejoice in Jehovah,  
 My heart is joyful in my God,  
 He clothes me in garments of salvation,  
 He covereth me with a princely robe.  
 As a bridegroom I stand in priestly attire,  
 As a bride in her bridal adorning;  
 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,  
 And as the garden causeth its seed to grow,  
 So Jehovah causeth righteousness to spring up,  
 And glory before all the nations.\*

Such among this people were the images of the sanctuary. Unity among brethren and in families could not be more beautifully set forth, than by the odour of the precious ointment, that was poured upon the head of the high priest.† As the most precious odour offered to Jehovah diffused around an

\*Simon, the son of Onias, the high priest,  
 How was he honoured before the whole people!  
 When he came forth out of the Sanctuary,  
 As the Morning star coming out of a cloud,  
 As the full moon, as the clear sun  
 Shineth upon the temple of the Most High.  
 As the rainbow painted the bright cloud,  
 As the rose in the spring of the year,  
 As lilies by the rivers of water.

See the whole passage Ecclesiasticus. chap. 50,

†Ps. cxxxiii.

agreeable sensation, which nothing else gave, so unity among brethren spread a delight and fragrancý, in the highest sense pleasing both to God and man. Princes and priests were from the earliest times associated under the conceptions that both stood in the place of God, and in this language, according to the origin of the word, they were, as servants who might approach the Divinity, synonymous. In the family government of the primitive world the father was the prince and priest of his family; Melchisedeck, king of righteousness, and priest of the most high God. The Psalm, which depicts the regal dignity in the highest colours, which places the king by the side of Jehovah, and enthrones him at his right hand, exalts him to this dignity only by associating him with the conception of the priesthood.\*

Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent,  
Thou art a priest forever.  
I make thee in rank a Melchisedeck.

In the later periods of Hebrew poetry priests and angels were associated.† Since the priests were messengers of Jehovah, that is, administrators of his laws, since they had the privilege of approaching to the throne of God, and serving him in his temple, as soon as the heavens came to be represented as the tent and temple of God, the representation of priests serving him there also was a natural consequence. Even in Isaiah the Seraphim are princes and priests, that is servants of a king enthroned in his temple.‡ In the vision of Ezechiel the angel, who marks the innocent that they may be spared, is a priest; || as also the sublime form in Daniel, who interprets the vision.§ At this period all the images of purity, of dignity, and magnificence from those ancient times were spiritualized, and referred to these heavenly powers; and in this form also appear the angels of the New Testament.

\*Ps. cx. † Mal. ii 7. iii. 1. ‡ Isa. vi. 2. || Ezech. ix. 3. § Dan. x. 5.



**In the Revelation of John angels and heavenly priests, are one and the same. In this and in the Epistle to the Hebrews Christ, when his highest regal dignity is to be exhibited, is represented as a high priest.**

**Fourth.** Before the princes of the East no one could venture to appear without presents; this custom Moses availed himself of to introduce into his system the use of the ancient patriarchal offerings, and to allure the senses and affections of the people more entirely from Egyptian customs, and to attain also other ends, that will be mentioned hereafter. Among the Egyptians living beasts were offered only to the infernal God, Typhon, and for this purpose those were selected, which were noxious, hateful, and of evil omen; while to the good spirits were offered inanimate, and for the most part odoriferous gifts. As Moses, the most zealous enemy of slavery, made inalienable freedom the fundamental law of his nation, so he consecrated the whole nation, especially the firstborn, who had been spared in the last Egyptian plague, as the property of Jehovah. Here God remitted his right; he gave to the father his son, and received instead of him a beast for an offering; but of necessity a clean beast, because nothing unclean could approach a holy God, much less be presented to him as an offering. So also with the fruits of the land, which belonged to God, and of which he reserved to himself the first fruits, as a thankoffering, and an acknowledgment of the tenure, by which the land was held. The first fruits and the whole offerings were the first proper sacrifices of duty and of righteousness, as expressed in the language of the Psalm.

Do good according to thy good pleasure unto Zion,  
Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.  
Then shall sacrifices of duty please thee,  
The offerings, which go up with incense,  
The young bullocks upon thine altar.

**The sin and trespass offerings had a purpose equally good;**

they brought out secret sins, which the law could not punish, and even sins of omission, before Jehovah, that is, before his judges, and were thus better than auricular confessions, police officers, and cruel secret tribunals. Here they came with frankness before God; with the sin offering in their hands, took upon themselves the punishment, which the law prescribed, and dared not wait for it from the arbitrement of the priest. Even the inconvenience of this offering, which could be made only before the sanctuary, made some degree of foresight necessary. But the best application, which poetry made of these offerings, was of a spiritual kind.

Have compassion on me according to thy mercy,\*  
 In thy great mercy blot out my transgressions.  
 For lo! I am a sinful man,  
 And sinful the mother, which bore me.  
 But thou lovest inward truth alone; †  
 And shewest me the hidden sense of thy law.  
 As a priest must thou cleanse me, ‡  
 And then shall I be clean.  
 If thou wash me, I shall be white like snow.  
 Look not upon my misdoings,  
 Blot out all my transgressions,  
 Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
 Renew a right spirit within me.  
 So will I teach transgressors thy way,  
 And sinners shall turn unto thee.  
 Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God;  
 So will I sing aloud of thy righteousness.  
 Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it;  
 Thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. ||  
 The sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit,

\*Ps. li.

† "The outward offering is not thy aim. It has a spiritual meaning, which the people know not, and which thou has taught me."

‡ This is the hidden import of sacrifices according to David's understanding. God must purify men, and the purification of the priest could be only an emblem of this.

|| For murder and adultery no expiatory offering could be made.

An humble and broken heart,  
Thou dost not despise.

And in another prayer, where he renders thanks for benefits.

Many things, O Jehovah, hast thou done for us,\*  
And thy wonderful thoughts are without number.  
Yet will I declare, and speak of them,  
Though they cannot be numbered.

Sacrifice, and offering thou didst not desire,  
Thou saidst to me secretly in mine ear,†  
Burnt-offering and sin-offering thou wouldst not.

Then Saïd I, lo ! I come freely,‡  
Yea it is written for me in the law,  
I delight to do thy will, O my God !  
What thou requirest is within my heart.

I will proclaim what is thy will,  
Before all the people,  
I will not refrain my lips,  
O Jehovah, thou knowest.

A publick confession, publick songs of contrition and thanksgiving, David here puts in the place of sacrifices, and maintains, that in so doing, he fulfils the inward and true sense of the law. The Prophets are filled with corresponding expressions. We have no sacrificial songs in the Scriptures, such as the pagans used ; those which treat of sacrifices are all moral and spiritual. So, also, was it with the most ancient, and

\* Ps. xl. 5—10.

† The expression, “ thou openest mine ear,” means obviously only what is clearly expressed afterwards. Thou lettest me silently apprehend thy will, thy proper aim, in all sacrifices. Thou sayest in mine ear, what the common people do not know, the sense of thy written law, and of the duties there prescribed.

‡ That is, “ as a servant I am gladly obedient to the secret voice. “ If this be the inward and proper sense of the law, it abides also in my own breast. It is that, which my own heart longs after, and gladly performs as duty. Compare Deut. xxx. 11. 12.

most pleasing, unbloody thank-offerings, and offerings of incense. We have one song respecting them, of which the most enlightened age need not be ashamed. It is

**THE FIFTIETH PSALM.—ASAPH'S.**

The God of Gods, Jehovah, spake,  
And called upon the earth,  
From the rising of the sun to its going down.

From Zion, the glory of the land, God shone forth\*  
Our God cometh, and shall not be silent,  
Devouring fire goeth forth before him,  
And a mighty tempest is round about him.  
He calleth the heavens above, and the earth,†  
To give judgment upon his people.

“ Gather my saints together unto me,  
Who have covenanted with me by sacrifice.”  
And all the heavens proclaimed him judge,  
Jehovah, as a righteous judge.

Hear, O my people, and I will speak,  
I will testify against thee, even I, thy God.  
I reprove thee not for thy burnt offerings,‡  
For the incense, that ever ascends to me.  
I desire no bullocks from thy house,  
Nor he goats out of thy folds,  
For every beast of the forest is mine,  
The beasts upon a thousand hills.  
I know all the fowls of the mountains,  
And the wild beast of the field is mine.  
If I were hungry, I need not tell thee,  
For mine is the world and its fulness,

\* As always from mountains; now however, no longer from Sinai and Seir, but from Zion, the glorious crown, the chief ornament of the whole land, because God dwelt upon it.

† Before heaven and earth Israel had bound themselves to his covenant, Deut. xxxi. 28. and these must now, therefore, be witnesses, how Israel had understood and kept it. The Allwise, however, v. 7. speaks in their name, and the judge becomes himself the witness.

‡ That is, I do not put you upon trial with regard to external offerings; of these you bring me enough.

Thinkest thou I eat the flesh of bullocks ?  
 Or drink the blood of goats ?  
 Offer unto God thanksgiving,  
 Pay thy vows to the Most High,  
 Call upon me in the day of trouble,  
 And when I deliver thee, honour thou me.  
 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me,  
 And to him, that taketh heed to his way,  
 Will I show the salvation of God.

It would carry me too far, to go through more particulars of the Mosaick code, and show, how, even in regard to individual expressions, they have modified the language of poetry in the Prophets and Psalms. Let it suffice, to gather, yet, a few of the choicest specimens, since there is not room for a harvest of particular remarks.

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1. In the political organization of Israel, every thing was originally connected with the sanctuary, and even bodily diseases, like moral delinquences, were regarded as rendering the subject of them impure. Hence, not only those were very naturally used as emblems of these, but also, the Prophets and poets spake of them in the language of the Sanctuary, that is, freely, openly, and without circumlocution. They regulated themselves, in this particular, not according to the laws of good society among us, of which they knew nothing. They spake as the law of Moses spake, as the father of his people thought. To the physician, expressions are allowed, which the refined villain, from no regard to morality, avoids ; and a physician, who passes judgment as a priest, must not direct himself by the modes of a later and different age. It is mere folly, also, to judge of this whole class of words and images among the Hebrews by the caprices of our customs, and to affect to shudder at a Psalm, which paints base crimes in the form of loathsome eruptions, or at a chapter of the Prophets,

which describes with truth and energy, the corrupt manners of the age. In this, too, however, poetry is modified in accordance with the particular age and character of the poet. At the court of Solomon was not heard the language, which Ezechiel, the son of a priest, who had earnestly devoted himself to study the law of Moses, the temple, and the ancient customs, ventured to employ in his minute expositions. Such things were called by their true names in the East, too, for the very purpose of awakening detestation and loathing, by the shame of the exposure ; for it is known, that those nations, in all these points, feel disgust more readily than we. By the Jewish law impurities were severely prohibited, which, among us are free from restraint, and an Arab would often blush at the questions of a European.

2. In the Sanctuary every small vessel, and every distinct part of the wall or tent had its name, and since all these things, as a Divine plan devised on Mount Sinai, and minutely described in the law, came down to a later age, it was a matter of course, that they should become the subjects of reflection, and poetical embellishment. Yet, it is not the less true, that the best periods of Hebrew poetry knew nothing of the fables, which were invented by the allegorizing spirit of a later age. What David sings of the hidden import of the law, is all of it really contained in Moses, and the developments of the Prophets, remain always true to the general character and frame of the institution. After the captivity, when the second temple was to be built, hidden meanings began to be devised, yet with some degree of wisdom, as is seen in Haggai and Zecharias. The spirit of mystical interpretation first spread itself from Egypt, at a still later period.

I do not mean by this to say, that the tabernacle of Moses, and his form of Divine worship, were not significant, even in their minute particulars. They were so, but only in regard to the general spirit of his law, and in the relation of individual parts to the whole. Moses was from Egypt and we know the

Egyptians were fond of hieroglyphics in their religious service, and even in their sacred edifices. Of some, he himself explains the import,\* and thereby puts us upon the track ; in following which, however, we must keep to the age of Moses, and the point of view, in which he stood ; otherwise, we are in danger of seeing every thing in a wrong and inverted position. The Prophets will furnish occasions for saying something on this point, and something will be indicated in the following poetical sketch, but this is not the place to go into the general character of the whole.

3. The peculiar purpose of Moses, in giving the law, was not sacrifices, nor the forgiveness of sins, but the prosperity of the State, the political welfare of the people of Jehovah. The most enlightened of the Prophets, especially Samuel and Isaiah, proceeded on the same plan, and there is no one of them, who did not make this a leading object in his discourses and plans. If, therefore, in far later times, particular sayings and customs were separated from their true relations, and more importance attached to them, than Moses and his followers gave them, in the relations which they held with others, if in regard to the so called penitential Psalms, and the goat, that was sent into the wilderness, systems were invented, of which David and Moses never thought, this is yet but the common and necessary result, to which the revolutions of time subject them. It is to be considered, that those later ages had a number of different books, whose different sentiments they confounded together, and whose language, moreover, they employed for clothing their own thoughts. Here, too, it was a matter of importance what kind of men made use of them, what ideas they had in their own minds, and what would particularly find favour with them; finally, in what regard they were themselves,

\* Thus Moses speaks of the circumcision of the heart, that the priest, when he goes into the sanctuary, bears the sins of the people, &c. The latter gave occasion, perhaps, to the beautiful 53d chapter of Isaiah, as the 11th verse shows.

held by the succeeding age, and what kind of style its taste approved. This was sometimes the poetical, then the philosophical; and the best course, therefore, is to leave every thing to its own age, and its own author, and go to the original form of Moses, the ancient Israelitish Egyptian.

4. If any one institution has more especially tended to preserve the poetry and the laws of Moses, it is the Sabbath. To this are we indebted for the preservation, in the freshness of living beauty, of all these treasures of the poetic art. Not only was it owing to this, that the remembrance of the Creator of the world, (itself an idea in the highest degree productive to the human race), retained and associated with their national blessings, was celebrated in prayers and songs; not only that in somewhat more enlightened and quiet times, passages of the law, with or without reflection, were read and expounded; chronology, reading, writing, history, political order, ancient ideas, and new hopes, in short, the intelligence and cultivation of the people, were held at least, in reserve by this simple institution, and by means of it were, after they had fallen into neglect, revived in better times. With the sabbaths and festivals were associated the order of the state, and the regulation of the calender, and with these their freedom, and the year of jubilee. Can we, then, find fault with the Prophets, that they clothe in images derived from these so many golden dreams of future happiness, and express, in joyful songs, ideas of endless freedom and perpetual jubilee, with obvious reference to sabbatical institutions and forms? What man becomes thus animated without hope, and is it not the greatest, the noblest, and the most steadfast soul, that amidst the corruptions of the times, and from the ruins of former prosperity, foresees and celebrates in song the greater prosperity and happiness, that is still to be attained.



## V.

### OTHER REGULATIONS OF MOSES.

1. Of the mode, in which Moses preserved and honoured the paternal authority. Effects of it observed in idiomatical expressions, in the tone of history, in the maxims of morality, and the moral poetry of the Hebrews.
2. Relation of the wife to her husband and to the family. Proofs of it in passages of poetry, and of the Mosaic laws. Figurative representations respecting family discipline, marriage, fruitfulness, love, and wisdom. Moral precepts, of the mother of Lemuel to her son.—Praise of a country housewife among the Hebrews.
3. Union of families in a tribe. Independent freedom of the individual tribes. Whether Moses took into view the existence of distinctions of rank in the capital city, the luxury and warlike glory of his nation. Form of Hebrew poetry, as derived from the rural simplicity of the people.
4. Why the Prophets were so zealous against luxury and oppression. The purpose, which they aimed to attain, marked out in the Mosaic economy, their right and authority.
5. Connexion of all the tribes through their relation to the promised land and to the Patriarchs. Confinement of the people and of the law of Moses to the local boundaries of the country. Local character of all the Hebrew writings, hopes and poetic inventions. Of the peculiar providence of God over Canaan. Origin of this kind of representation. Use of it in Moses and in the poets.
6. Second bond of connexion among the tribes from the Theocracy. General principle of the government. Dignity and beauty of it for rational beings. Proofs from the tribunals, punishments, taxes, revenues, &c. Most of the Hebrew poetry of a political character.
7. Objection against the tribe of Levi as being the chief support of the Theocracy. Why this tribe was placed in that condition. First plan of Moses. The manner, in which the lawgiver limited this tribe, the duties imposed upon it, and how far it was injurious to the general organization.
8. Of the Prophets, on whom the hopes of Moses were placed. Sad

fate of Moses, that he could not himself establish his laws in Canaan. Causes and consequences of this, and his own regret on account of it. End of the 90th Psalm. Hope of Moses.

9. Of the reference to God in the laws of Moses. Necessity and use of this. Whether it was merely pretended. Whether we can or ought to decide on this point. The law of God and Moses, a Jewish fable.

It will be necessary to say yet a few words respecting the customs of the nation, of whose poetry we are treating, respecting the cultivation, which they received through the laws of Moses, and generally respecting the political design of these laws. For we can attain a distinct knowledge of the fruit only through a knowledge of the tree, on which it grew.

1. *The relations of father and child*, constituted the primitive forms of government among men, and with a race of herdsmen, such as the Hebrews were, these remained for a long period the firmest bonds of union. As the Israelites had before them as examples, in the patriarchs of their tribes, no other than a paternal government, so were these inherent rights of humanity held sacred by the law of Moses. It prescribed to children the reverence of their parents, as the condition, on which they were to enjoy the land of promise, and the same lesson is enforced by the moral poetry of the nation. Their language has no more favourite expression, by which to designate even a king, a priest, a Prophet, the director or inventor of a thing, than the word *father*. Their history had an expression of childlike simplicity in its style, because its earliest productions were from the times, when they were still a race of herdsmen, and these served as a model for those which followed. So too are their proverbs and preceptive instructions peculiarly marked by a tone of paternal kindness and unaffected sincerity, of which scarcely any other people can furnish an example, because the poetry of no other people goes back to so early a period of the human race. The first chapters of the Proverbs of Solomon, which serve as an introduction to the book, are written with a style of engaging earn-

estness, and from the lips of the teacher, alluring his son to the paths of wisdom and virtue, flows as it were milk and honey. Even the rigorous and precise laws of Moses do not abandon this tone, wherever they enforce human obligations, and the book of Deuteronomy has the dignity and impressiveness of a sage imparting the lessons of wisdom to his children. Let one collect what is said, of the relation of children to their parents of and domestic happiness, in the Proverbs, Psalms, and Prophets, and he will have a summary of the earliest and most delightful moral sentiments. The ethical poetry of the Persians is refined, that of the Arabians subtle and discriminating, that of the Hebrews simple and childlike; the delicate nourishment of the primitive age of humanity.

2. The wife according to Oriental notions was subjected to the husband. They had no thought of a sovereign and reposing elevation of this sex, and celebrated in it only chastity, industry, modest, domestic, and matronly virtues. Customs, such as the luxurious poetry of later times ascribes to them, would in that age of the world have been folly or shame. It is therefore absurd to look for the gallant poetry of fashionable conversation among a people, when the female sex, shut up in retirement, either bloomed as a flower in the garden, or bore fruit like the vine.

Blessed is he that feareth Jehovah,\*  
 And walketh in his ways,  
 Thou shalt eat the labour of thy hands,  
 Happiness and prosperity are with thee.  
 Thy wife is like the fruitful vine,  
 That spreads on the sides of thy house;  
 Thy children around thy table  
 Like plantations of young olives.  
 Thou shalt see thy children's children,  
 And peace upon Israel.

\*Ps. cxxviii.

That was the happiness of a rural simplicity, which poetry celebrated. The peaceful times of the future could not, it seems, be more vividly pictured to a distracted kingdom, than by the expression,†

A new thing will Jehovah create in the land,

A woman shall compass a man.

(that is there shall be so much security round about, that even the wife can give him protection, and, according to the condition of the ancient world, in the sphere of domestick happiness encompass him as a crown.) The laws of Moses place a high estimate upon this family enjoyment. The human lawgiver excused even from warlike service every man, who had built an house, and had not yet inhabited it, who had planted a vineyard, and had not yet enjoyed its fruits, who had betrothed a wife, and had not yet brought her to his home. "Let him go," says the sage with a noble sentiment, "and remain at home, lest he die in the war, and another dedicate his house, another enjoy his vineyard, and another take home his betrothed wife."\* Happy the lawgiver who was capable of such sentiments!

The laws of Moses interest themselves, therefore, very carefully for the instruction, and the chaste conduct, of the daughters of Israel, the degrees of kindred, which might be united; and the publick purity of morals in the relations of the two sexes. No unchaste woman was tolerated in Israel. The lawgiver aimed to obviate whatever has a tendency to debase human nature, to render the familiar intercourse of near relatives dangerous, or to degrade the wife in the eyes of her husband. On all these points the laws of Moses are the most moral, and the most prudently devised, which were ever framed under such a climate. Let any one collect together the moral precepts of Solomon, and the son of Sirach, which

\*Jer. xxxi. 22. \*Deut. xx. 5—7.

treat of the virtues and attractions of women, and he will find there all that is ornamental in innocence, in gracefulness, in a quiet and sociable temper, and in industry, interwoven as in a garland of flowers. The happiness of a well, and the misery of an ill advised marriage, are painted in appropriate colours. It is not without occasion, that the bridegroom is anointed with the oil of gladness, crowned with a festal garland, and praised in songs of gratulation. The fruitfulness of the marriage relation was valued above all earthly blessings, and the numerous expressions in the Psalms\* respecting an unexpected good fortune under the figure, "that God makes the barren woman to be the mother of children," had in the sense of that nation the strongest emphasis. So it is with the song of the mother of Samuel,† who ascends by a climax of triumphal expression, from her own domestic happiness to the happiness of her country, and of the world. So also with the frequent promises, that God shall distinguish the upright more especially with this blessing.

Lo children are an heritage from Jehovah,  
 A flourishing offspring are his reward.  
 As arrows in the hand of the hero,  
 So are sons in the pride of youth.  
 Happy the man, whose quiver  
 Is stored with arrows like these.  
 They shall not be ashamed,  
 When they speak with foes before the judge.

The Platonism of love, as well as a monastic sanctity pertaining to the marriage relation, are foreign to the poetry of this people; but how delicate and refined sentiments, notwithstanding, pervade all the scenes in the garden of love in Solomons songs. The sweetest attractions bloom there like garden flowers, the most delicate fruits are tested with the innocence of a brothers and sisters love. In the Proverbs of

\*Ps. cxiii. 6. &c. †1 Sam. ii. 1.

Solomon wisdom and folly are both females. The latter could be represented under no image with more forcible admonition, than as the personification of a seducing adulteress, the former, that wisdom which instructs and enlivens, becomes to the young man a bride, a mother, the object of his love, yea, the daughter of God, beloved from eternity. The passage of perhaps the most striking force in the Proverbs of Solomon is a lesson, which a mother teaches her son. It confirms by an example what I have been saying, and it will furnish, I trust, an agreeable interruption to my course of remark, if I insert it here, together with the eulogy of women, which immediately follows it.\*

The words of King Lemuel,  
The oracle, which his mother taught him.  
Ah my son ! thou son of my heart !  
Thou son of all my vows,  
Give not thy strength to women,  
Confide not thy ways  
To the destroyers of kings.

Neither is it for kings, O Lemuel !  
Neither is it for kings to drink wine,  
Nor strong drink for those in power.  
They drink and forget the laws,  
And wrest the cause of all the poor.  
Give strong drink to him, that is hopeless,  
And wine to the bitter in soul ;  
Let him drink and forget his sorrow,  
And think of his misery no more.

Open thy mouth for the dumb,  
And undertake the cause of the orphans.  
Open thy mouth and judge righteously,  
And do justice to the suffering poor.

A virtuous woman, who shall search out ?  
Her preciousness is far above rubies.  
The heart of her husband can trust in her,  
So that he hath abundance of spoil.

\*Prov. xxxi.

Love and kindness will she show him,  
And do him no evil all her days.

She diligently seeketh cotton and wool,  
And worketh cheerfully with her hands.  
She is like the merchant's ships,  
She bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth up while it is yet night:  
Giveth meet to her household, and work to her maidens;  
She considereth a field, and buyeth it,  
From the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth herself with new strength,  
Still braceth her arms for renewed toil;  
For she tasteth the fruit of her diligence,  
And even by night her lamp goeth not out.

She reacheth her hand to the distaff,  
Her hand holdeth the spindle.  
She openeth her hand to the poor,  
She reacheth forth her hand to the needy.

She feareth not for her household,  
In the snows of the winter season,  
For all her household are doubly clothed.

She worketh fine clothing for herself,  
Her festal garment is byssus and purple;  
For her husband is already known in public,  
And sitteth with the elders in council.

She weaveth veils and selleth them,  
And furnisheth girdles to the merchants,  
Worth and honour are her apparel,  
She hails with gladness every opening day.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom,  
In her tongue is only the law of kindness.  
She looketh well to the ways of her household,  
And idleness eateth not her bread.

Her sons go forth and call her blessed,  
Her husband also, and praiseth her.  
"Many daughters of the land do virtuously,  
But thou excellest them all.  
Charms are deceitful, and beauty vain,  
But a woman, that feareth God, deserveth praise,  
Give her the reward of her diligence,  
Let her works be praised before all.

Such was the praise of an industrious country woman in the country of the Hebrews, for the whole economy of it was rural.

3. Moses connected throughout particular families each with its own tribe, and to this he gave its own independent domain, the right of establishing its own regulations, and tribunals, and even the liberty to carry on war upon its own account. No contest need come before the supreme tribunal, that was not brought there from choice. The father was at the head of his own family, the most aged men ruled over the families of their descendants, and from these each tribe had its princes or chief rulers. The several generations were associated together by natural bonds, by the laws of property, by reverence for age and experience, and by the ties of blood. The judge could always know fully his own land, and the business pertaining to it. In the earlier life of industry it might be anticipated as a reward to become aged in the midst of the family, for gray hairs were the ornament of the aged, and the crowning glory of the tribe. I will not institute a comparison of this with what may be the fate of the aged in states managed by a system of police, but only remark, that, even in the poetry of this people, we every where discover the respect paid to the aged, to the patriarch of the family and of the tribe. Moses had not made the honour of families and distinctions of birth dependent upon a gilded despotism, and the servile dignities of a royal city; much less had he founded the glory of his whole people upon luxurious pomp or martial renown. Gainful employment and industry were to be the sinews of the state; tranquility, and the honour of the family connexion, the delightful reward of industry and of wisdom. In this light the Psalms and Prophets picture the happiness of the people, "that every one should enjoy the fruits of his labour, and dwell securely under his own olive and figtree." The first precepts of wisdom among the Hebrews, therefore, are lessons from the mouth of experienced old men, the counsels of kind and



aged parents. Even their most refined philosophical remarks assume this shape, as we see in Ecclesiastes, and some later didactic poems of the Hebrews. It is for this very reason, that the Scriptures are so interesting to children, and to artless, labouring and unsophisticated people. They find in it the language of their hearts, the lessons or collected experience of their lives; every thing is connected with the practical business of their lives both in the origin and the application. In Tyre, Sidon, or Carthage, in a warlike state of Cyclops and cannibals, such poems were never sung, such simply sublime and divine thoughts never produced, as in this country of agriculturists and herdsmen, amidst mountains, which toil and industry alone could render productive. The poetess Deborah was a dweller in tents, beneath the palm trees, the Psalmist David was a shepherd, Amos was the same, and in all the Prophets the simplicity of rural nature in their language and imagery is too obvious to be mistaken. Whoever will then, may choose the poetry of refinement and luxurious pride, but that which human nature finds adapted to its most indispensable wants, which it requires for support in its greatest trials, and for its earliest development, cordial sympathy, simplicity, and dignity are found in their fullest abundance in the ancient, mature thoughts of patriarchal instruction.

4. From this we may judge, why not only Samuel proceeded so unwillingly to the choice of a king, but the Prophets, also, showed so warm a zeal against the luxury of the country, especially the capital city. Luxurious pride, as well as a king, were foreign to the legislation of Moses. The country of the Hebrews had the most eligible situation, either for enjoying or selling the fruits of their industry; but Israel could never, consistently with its leading and essential character, become a mercantile nation, carrying on trade with distant parts, or a monarchical power engaging in foreign conquests. On both points the views of the lawgiver were too humane and enlight-

ened. He preferred health to superfluity, and the happiness, which attends on industry and temperance, to worldly renown with enervation and tyranny. Those, therefore, who are fond only of these variegated and bloody pictures in the poetry of a nation, must look for them among other nations. Jeshurun was to be an industrious and upright people of a mountainous country, who after their first conquest should live at peace. And although they in fact seldom enjoyed this, because the conquest of the country was not completed from the beginning, and for the most part was governed in a manner very much at variance with the law of Moses ; yet, the fundamental principles of his economy, were so apparent, that every patriot could refer to them, as to the law of the land. How excellent was the course adopted by Moses in permitting every Prophet to do this by virtue of his Prophetic character, and to appeal to the law of the land ! Whether the king or the elders followed depended on themselves, the Prophet notwithstanding, spake in the name of Jehovah, that is, by the authority of the national God, and the original constitution of the country. This high vocation and name admonished him without partiality and favouritism to become the genius of the nation, the upraised voice of publick freedom and virtue, a curb for the restraint of tyranny and corruption. In all the Prophets, whose works we have, it is distinctly to be shown, that even on political occasions the law of Moses was always the ground of decision, to which they appealed, that in their counsels they remained true to the principles of their national constitution, and therefore spake, not as fanatics, but as Israelites, as citizens appointed and authorized so to do. Respecting many of their so called prophecies, this principle will give us new light, and whoever finds himself perplexed on account of the misinterpreted term “spirit of Jehovah,” may, perhaps, get a clearer view of the matter by substituting a term much used at present, “publick spirit.”

5. But as they were to be, notwithstanding, but one people,

how did Moses bind together, so as to effect this, twelve free and independent republics? In the first place, by means of their country, and in the next by the gentlest bond, that can bind together free and rational beings, the law of a Divine government. I could wish, that every one, who has any objection yet unremoved, against this term, which has been so much complained of, would lay them aside, till he shall have read a few pages farther.

Moses united the tribes together by means of their country. It was the land of Jehovah, the country of their common ancestors, which had been given exclusively to them from time immemorial. The right of property pertained to Jehovah, and only the usufruct was theirs. To the land strictly appertained also the law, and to the law the land of Jehovah. They could not be separated, and God would expel the nation from the country, so soon as they forsook the law, as he had driven out the Canaanites before them; and since the law, which constituted them the people of the God of their fathers, could not be observed out of the limits of Judæa, they would cease with their expulsion from it to be the people of God. By these means Moses bound the hearts of his people to the soil; he made their country indispensable to them, because out of it they, Israel, was Israel no longer. With united force they were to take possession of it, with fraternal feeling divide it among them, and thus quietly inhabit it as one united people. Above it was protected by Mount Libanus, on the right by the river Jordan, (the tribes beyond did not properly pertain to the country), South by the desert, and West by the sea. We shall see also, that, according to the plan of Jacob, the tribes were to be so placed, that they might forever have protected themselves from external force. Now, though this object was not attained, nor the will of the Patriarch followed, yet Moses did not fail of his purpose to render the country and people inseparable from each other. Hence, the confined, local spirit, which appears in all the Prophets. Hence, in the Psalms,

and in all the works pertaining to the captivity, the sighing after their own land. Even now, after two thousand years full of vain and delusive hopes, the Jews still indulge the same longing after the land of their fathers, for there only can God reign, there only his law be observed, and there only shall those, who sleep beneath the earth, awake again to life.—What all ancient lawgivers sought to accomplish, to bind their people by strong feeling to the land of their fathers, Moses has attained in the most effectual manner, by giving locality to his law, and by the national God of his fathers. He planted a wild vine on the mountains of Jehovah, and encompassed his people with the arms of the most *special and local Providence*.

Since so much is said in the way of objection against this last phrase, and all those Psalms, which are formed upon the same conception, are the object of such peculiar criticism, I may be permitted to say a word more particularly respecting it.

The first sensuous impression, which Moses gave his people respecting the providence of God over their country, was obviously such as this.\*

It is a land unlike to Egypt,  
Whose waters flow from rivers :  
A land of hills and valleys,  
That drinketh rain from heaven.  
Thy God doth visit it continually,  
Jehovah's eyes behold it  
From the beginning of the year,  
Until the end thereof.

And whoever is acquainted with the make and condition of Judæa, as compared with Egypt, may see the exact truth of this description. The fertility of the soil depended on the favourableness of the weather, and was therefore immediately, as it were, under the careful eye of the God of heaven, and

\* Deut. xi. 10. 12.

indebted to a constant Providence. The early and the latter rains, the wind from this or that quarter of the heavens determined the success or failure of every thing, and so it was very natural, that Moses should take, as he did, heaven and earth to be witnesses of their covenant, and call upon them to avenge its every violation. The heaven was to become iron and the earth brass, the early and latter rains to fail, and the East wind to sweep them away, &c. if they did not obey the law of God, who looked down upon them from these heavens, and who gave them this land for a possession. Every one perceives how impressive, how adapted to time and place, were these voices from Gerizim and Ebal. They embrace the whole character and mode of thinking of the nation thus delivered, and transplanted hither, and all the peculiar qualities of the country. Every thing must remind them of their law, every season of the year, every fertile spot and watered glen, but still more their religious worship, with its festivals and ceremonies. And on this circumstance was formed the genuine national spirit of the Psalms and Prophets. Yet it was no weak superstition or fanatical faith, which he required of them, but a faith in the special care and providence of God, such as we ought all to cherish, only with a local application to the law and land of their fathers.

6. But the theocracy, which has been so often scoffed at? So far from deeming it to be in need of an apology, I could rather wish, that, in a form adapted to our degree of cultivation, we might all enjoy the same thing, for it is precisely that, which all men wish for, and for which all wise men have laboured, but which Moses alone and at so early a period had a heart to carry into effect, namely:—*that the law should govern and not a lawgiver, that a free people should adopt it of their own free will, and voluntarily observe it, that an invisible, rational, beneficent power should control us, and not fetters and chains.* Such was the idea of Moses, and I know of none more pure and sublime. But alas! for that and all the insti-

tutions founded on it, he came three or four thousand years too early, and perhaps, at the end of six thousand, another Moses would find, that the time had not yet come.

All government is matter, not of choice, but of necessity, that, which is too corporeal and visible, becomes a yoke of oppression, nay, often a disgrace to human nature. The lighter and more invisible are the bonds, which unite a community together, the more the governing principle must work upon their minds, and that in secret and without witnesses, as a motive of inward actions can work upon them, finally, the more all arbitrary power, caprice, and the exclusive domination of one or a few men, which always is felt as severe, is excluded, and all power is vested in a national law, above the reach of arbitrary will, and as it were, established upon an invisible throne; by so much is a constitution of government the more noble, and worthy of man, as a free and rational being. And what is the principle, and the form of government, thus described, but the theocracy of Moses. The law reigned, inwardly indued with the authority of the Divine word, and outwardly authorized by the united voice of the people. It was enthroned in the national temple. This was a tabernacle or tent of the God of the country, which belonged to all the twelve tribes, and was to unite them together, as one family and worshippers of one God. Hence, the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, which severed the national bond of union, were objects of peculiar hatred to the Prophet. Thus it was to Jehovah, and not to a man of arbitrary dominion, that they were bound by obligations of duty and good faith. Before him they stood, with their thoughts and deeds exposed to his view, yet, not as slaves, but as children, as a chosen inheritance; and the blessings, which he bestowed upon the people, were ever recalled to their remembrance, as rational men, and rehearsed anew in songs and the lessons of the Prophets.—What more refined method is there to combat the wants of the country, than to commit them to the sanctuary of the nation, instead of

the courtly sensualities of a throne, to place men with their delinquencies before Jehovah, instead of a man, perhaps, no less criminal than they. Who has not felt how much oppression is involved in giving to men power over the life of men? in committing the right of condemnation and of pardon to the caprice of an individual? in having courts of justice composed and held, not in the presence of God and the nation, not by judges chosen of the people, but by the hired servants of princes, in fortified places, in a labyrinth of judicial halls, technical formularies, &c. Moses had higher and purer conceptions of the matter. His tribunals of justice were held in publick. The law of the national God dictated the punishment, and no judge could give a dispensation. The bench of justice was God's, and belonged not to a created man. His laws, and the admonitions of the Prophets respecting them, sound like the uttered voice of Divine justice, and the very spirit of rectitude. Joy, pride, and glory in the name of Jehovah, were to be the impelling principles of all publick action. This joy and this glory were called religion, and the economy, which laid the foundation for it, which rendered the law of Jehovah a perpetual invisible code, we denominate a theocracy. With the enthusiasm, which animated it, the songs and Prophetic oracles of the Hebrews, are filled. The greater part of their poetry, which is so generally held to be spiritual, is political.

7. "All this might perhaps be so," it will be said, "were it not, that Levi, as we find, was to be the guardian of the law, consequently the protector of the publick liberty. The superstitious, lazy domination of priests, who had the precedence of the other tribes, consumed their choicest revenues, and yet in times of distress could not help them, has confounded all these fine ideas."

There is, it must be admitted, some truth in this objection, and truth, which no one has seen more clearly, than Moses himself did. *His first plan was, that the first-born of every*

*family and tribe should be holy to the Lord ;\** consequently, also, serve at the altar of the national God ; and what a crown of honour to the nation, and how honourable to families would such an arrangement have been, in which all the heads of their several families should be judges, princes of the people, and servants in the palace of Jehovah. By this method the tribes would have been most intimately united and no jealousy could have separated them from each other.

But when the Israelites danced round a golden calf, when Moses saw, that he must not commit himself to the people at large, in their rude state, that they were far from being sufficiently advanced to be prepared by him single handed, for the prosecution and attainment of national ends in the name of Jehovah, what remained for the lawgiver, but to select a single tribe, and through that accomplish his purposes with the rest? This idea approached more nearly to the Egyptian economy, and was at least easier of execution, but it necessarily threw the apple of discord and jealousy among the tribes, all of whom would consider themselves as placed in rank below the chosen tribe. In the choice of this tribe, Moses naturally selected the one,† which was most nearly allied and most faithful to him, which on the occasion of the golden calf, that is, of the rebellion against Jehovah, had proved true, and which, moreover, had Aaron at its head. The brother of Moses, second in honour only to Moses in the deliverance of Israel, was also a prince of the Most High, the decorated image, though only an image, of a king and Supreme Judge. Moses saved the freedom of his nation as he could. The tribe of Levi had no inheritance, no executive, still less a legislative, and least of all, a despotic power. The execution of every political enterprize depended on the elders of the tribes of the whole people. Levi was only the learned, not the ruling tribe, and since on it depended the interpretation of the law,

\* Ex. xiii. 2. xix. 6. xx. 24.

† Ex. xxxii. 29.



the sanctuary, jurisprudence, medical knowledge, and whatever else of science pertained to that age, these things at least were not burthensome to the people by any wide distinction, which they implied. The priests were in every thing only counsellors, mere servants. Even in the highest consultation by Urim and Thummim, the royal shield of truth, the person of the high priest was lost sight of, for God spake, and if the priest was a man of any degree of feeling, he could not, under the impression of awe, which the most holy place inspired, and in the name of eternal truth, speak otherwise than in accordance with truth and rectitude.

Yet is it undeniable, that the dependance placed upon the priesthood in the system of Moses was the first to fail, and Moses seems himself, when in his benedictions he comes to Levi, to feel this.\* In the conquest and division of the country we find little employment of the breastplate of the high priest. The fulfilment of the law of Moses was not pressed, as it should have been, and here was laid the foundation of all the evils, which under Eli rose to almost perfect anarchy. The people also resolved to have a king, and with the reign of the kings the genuine Mosaic economy for the most part terminated. The reign of priests after the captivity was any thing but the ancient constitution of Moses; in short, the design of the lawgiver was scarcely apprehended at all, and still less realized—such was the constant complaint of the Prophets.

8. “But Moses placed his reliance upon a Prophet, such as he was, to whom Israel should give heed ~~as~~ to him; why did this Prophet never come? or if he came, destroy, instead of completing the work of Moses?” How has this great man been misapprehended, and his noblest principles traduced! The work of Moses remained alas! incomplete, for the stubbornness of his people, and his own sad destiny deprived him

\* Deut. xxxiii. 8.

of the longed for crown of his labours, the privilege of himself putting his laws in operation in the land of Canaan. In a few months after they went out of Egypt, the whole plan of his laws was arranged, men were sent to explore the country, and he was already upon its borders. But the cowardly people were rebellious, and he must return and encamp for thirty eight tedious years in the cheerless desert of a peninsula in the Red Sea. Of the history of this period we have nothing but an unpretending record of encampments, though it was here, that he was able to accomplish so much, and would have accomplished every thing for the establishment of his laws. Now it was, that he sang the 90th Psalm, in which he contemplates the generations vanishing away, and his own life passing as an idle tale, and directs himself to God as alone enduring.—We have already listened to one half of this sublime ode, let us now hear the other.

Who sees that this, O God, is thine anger,  
 That he may fear thee, as thy wrath is fearful?  
 Teach us, O Lord, so to number our days,  
 That we may apply our hearts to wisdom.  
 Turn, O Jehovah! how long art thou angry!  
 Comfort us again, we are thy people.  
 Let us early rejoice in thy goodness,  
 Then will we exult and be joyful,  
 All the days of our lives.  
 Make our lives, O Lord, joyful again,  
 Which thou so long hast afflicted,  
 Which so many years have seen only sorrow.  
 Let thy work, O Lord, appear,  
 Which thou hast reserved for thy servants,  
 Show them, show their children thy favour.  
 Let the smiles of Jehovah our God  
 Be upon us again, establish, O Lord,  
 Establish the work of our hands,  
 The work of our hands, establish thou it.

But the supplications of Moses did not avail. He was not destined to survive the establishment of his work in Canaan,

and since, as an old man of 120, he saw his death near, since he knew the character of his people, and no one was perceived, who could entirely fill his plan, what remained for him in his perplexity? With what could he sustain himself, but with the hope, that God himself would raise up another man like him, who should carry forward his designs to their completion, and to whom Israel would yield obedience. Such a man could not and would not destroy the work of Moses, for it was the national constitution, in accordance with which even the Prophets must speak and act. But alas! no such man appeared in that first age, on which so much depended. Joshua was merely a hero, and Eleazor a priest. The power was divided, and the rude tribes abandoned the fundamental principles of the Mosaic economy. Whether in later times, and after the period of the captivity, there were Prophets like Moses, we shall see hereafter; enough, that whoever has a human heart, and feels what pain and what anxious longings the lost labour of a year, to say nothing of a whole life, awakens in the soul will not grudge the dying legislator so patriotic a hope, at least for his last soothing consolation. It was indeed the only reward of his laborious and painful life.

9. "But why," it is asked, "did Moses give out his code of laws for the work of God, and his tables for the hand-writing of Jehovah, and why did he implant in the minds of his people their misanthropy and religious arrogance?"

And supposing as the question implies, that he merely *gave them out* as such did he not act wisely in doing so? What other means had he of attaining his end? Let one read what he endured for forty years, what he bore amidst all the miracles, the benefits and judgments, which he performed in the name of God. How then would he have succeeded had he gone forth with the cold dim light of political philosophy to restrain and convince his 600,000 rebels.

Laws must be held sacred, and for a rude people, such as the Israelites then were, they could become sacred in their eyes only by being regarded as divine. Even now our best

laws are wanting in sacredness and impressiveness in their relation to the minds of the people. Those, who violate look upon them as arbitrary and conventional rules, which they may venture to break over, and the lawgiver himself is the first to transgress. The economy of Moses was designed not to be thus. It was to be regarded, as the ordinances of God in nature are regarded, and as such is it celebrated in the Prophets and Psalms.

Consider it then, at least as a matter of necessity, as prudence and humility in the lawgiver, that the laws of Moses appear impressed with the glories of a Divine original. For the good of his people he erected an ever enduring monument, and yet his own name was not to receive the glory of it; the presiding Genius of the nation was its author.

Such is the answer, which I would give on the supposition, that his laws were not really, but only professedly of Divine origin. But why need we make this supposition? What greater work has Providence to accomplish among men, than to form and promulgate law and order, light and truth, among the nations? And was ever so much of these divine blessings conferred by one institution, as by the pure, the wise, and moral code of Moses?

And according to the conception of all nations is there a nobler work of God in the souls of men, than the divine thoughts, impulses, aims and energies, which he sometimes imparts to one chosen man for the cultivation of thousands? Those ancient lawgivers, the earliest and greatest benefactors of the human race, have they not universally been held by their cotemporaries, or their posterity for favourites of the Deity, and holding secret intercourse with the divine being? and which of them lived at so early a period as Moses?

Who now will determine, when in the soul of such a man, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and excited and actuated by the God of his fathers, the human ends, and the more than human begins? where, in the handwriting of the

tables, his finger and the finger of God met together. In the grammatical sense, we all know what is meant by *spirit* and *finger of God*, but here there is a historical relation of what was executed and done.

Nor must we judge of such matters according to what we see in our own times. We live in the midst of scattered ruins, amid arts and implements of all kinds. Every thing for us is previously devised, has become a familiar tale, and a matter of record. Our most familiar and intimate thoughts are devised, they are not our own. But in the deep stillness, in the sacred solitariness of that lonely descent—who of us can place himself there? who would venture to judge and decide concerning the inward working of God in a soul so pure, so full of energy?

And why need we decide? Let them, who stood by the mountain, and received the law, seek to comprehend the marvellous glory, which adorned the glowing heaven; why should we attempt it? It is enough, that the contents, and the effects of the law of Moses are Divine, and Divine also the poetry, to which it has given birth. The work and the effect bear testimony to the work-master.

*Ἐρχεν ἐπ' ἔργον*

*Θεοισιν επευξαμενος τελεσαι τουτων δε κρατησας  
γνωσσαι αθανατων τε θεων, θνητων τ' ανθρωπων  
συστασιν, ητις εκαητα διερχεται ητις κρατειται.*

## THE LAW OF GOD AND MOSES.

### A JEWISH FABLE.

Satan, the enemy of all good, learned that God had given to the earth a law, in which all the wisdom of heaven lay hidden, and which should put an end to the worship of Satan upon earth. He hastened therefore, to the earth, saying to it,

“Earth where hast thou the law, which God hath given thee?” And the Earth said, “The Lord knoweth the ways of his wisdom, I understand them not.” He went to the sea, and to the deep abyss. The sea and the abyss said, “It is not in me.” He went to the realms of death, and the dead said, “We have heard the fame thereof from afar.”

After he had traversed the world, and wandered through all the nations, that served him, he came into the Arabian desert, and saw a man with a shining countenance; it was Moses. He approached him in the garb of hypocrisy, being clothed as an angel of light, and with flattering address offered himself as his scholar. “Man of God,” said he, “who possessest the wisdom of Jehovah, and hast hidden all the understanding of the Elohim, and all the mysteries of creation in thy law.”

“Silence,” said Moses interrupting him with a look, that at the same time changed him again into his Satanic form, “silence! the law is Jehovah’s, not mine. With him is wisdom and understanding, counsel and strength; for man the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to avoid evil is understanding for him.”

Satan abashed shrunk back, and the angels of God approached to attend upon a man thus humble in his exaltation. They taught him, and he gave instruction to them. The prince of the law was his guardian spirit, and God himself answered from the cloud. “*Keep the law of Moses my servant*; because he was humble and gave me the glory, I have given it him for his own possession.

## VI.

### BLESSINGS PRONOUNCED UPON ISRAEL.

Whether Jacob anticipated that his posterity would be under the necessity of conquering Canaan by force of arms. Why so painful a necessity existed in the time of Moses. What was meant by a war of Jehovah. Whether the claims of the Jewish nation to Canaan could or need be sustained according to our systems of international law. Poetical title of gift, as evidence of right to the country, Jacob's blessings upon his sons. What he probably effected by them, and how far his views were adopted and followed. Explanation of the passage "he was fleeting as water" in the prophecy upon Reuben. Explanation of the blessing of Judah. A short history of what it imported. Designation of Issachar's place of residence. Where probably it was designed, that Dan should dwell. Illustration of the blessing of Joseph from local circumstances. General conception of Jacob's testament.

Blessing uttered by Moses. Difference between these and those of Jacob. Particular illustrations. Striking position of the land of Judea. Its poetical renown.

Appendix. Tabor the mountain of the sanctuary, a wise conception of Moses.

When Jacob predicted their destiny to his sons, he scarcely conceived, that they must conquer with the edge of the sword the land, which he promised them. He had quietly traversed it, and looked upon it as his father-land, where even in death his bones longed to find rest. This he divided to his sons according to the traits of their several characters, as a land for herdsmen. Of a bloody conquest no trace of a conception is found in his benediction. He looked with horror upon the deed of Simeon and Levi in destroying a Canaanitish town and family, who yet had insulted his race. He probably sup-

posed, that his sons would soon range over the country again, and establish themselves here and there, as he had pointed out to them. But it was destined to be otherwise. Four hundred years the nation lingered in Egypt, and had no national leader. It sunk under oppression, till finally, awakened by distress, it received a deliverer, whom yet it followed with difficulty. What hindrances did he find in his way? In Canaan itself every thing was changed. Immediately on his going out from Egypt the hordes of Amalek went forth to meet and oppose him, no people would willingly yield him a passage, and with arms in his hands he must open a way for his host. That Moses did this unwillingly we see from the whole account of his march. He chose not the shortest and most direct routes to Canaan, because he must have forced his passage through a nation of Egyptian origin, and he was chiefly careful for the safe return of his unwarlike host. Through some kindred nation as the Edomites he supposed that he might pass, and gave assurances against the slightest injury. All was to no purpose, and so his people must first range for thirty years in the desert, the aged die, and the young be formed into a warlike race in the best manner, that circumstances permitted. For one thing was certain, that among the inhabitants of Canaan the Israelites could not live in conformity with the laws of Moses. These nations were warlike hordes, and Israel was to be a peaceful, agricultural people. A part of the inhabitants of the country were troglodytes, dwellers in caves, and we know how debased and hateful these were in the eyes of Nomade tribes.

The sons of base men, nameless children,  
Who should be driven from the land ;

says Job,\* and Moses,† They must be expelled from the country on account of their savage mode of life, the promis-

\* Job. xxx. 1—8. † Lev. xviii 24—30. Num. xviii, 23. 29. 34,  
Deut. ii. 10—12. ix. 2. Wisdom of Sol. xii. 3—6,



cuous intercourse of the sexes, and other vices among them. The Hamitish superstition however was the blackest of all, for human sacrifices existed among them, and how could this consist with the Mosaic economy and political constitution? Only one means too remained of attaining the end, the sad but common right of war, as it existed in those times. They must leave the country or be destroyed! That Moses felt the severity of this measure, as deeply as we feel it, we see from the mild laws of war, which he prescribed to the Israelites for after times.\* He commanded even to spare the trees in a country made the seat of war. This too was now a war of sad necessity, or as it was called *a war of Jehovah*, that is, an expedition, to which they were constrained by a regard to the land of their fathers, their religion, the graves and primeval claims of their ancestors. What holy war of modern times would bear a comparison with it? And yet how fearfully has this expedition in the name of Jehovah, i. e. for ancient possessions and ancestral rights been abused! Israel fought *pro aris et focus patrum*, for from this country they came, and there lay the bones of their fathers. There was many a grove, and altar, sacred to the God of their fathers; every thing, which among ancient nations was denominated the family sanctuary, was to be sought there. The nation moreover could not remain in the desert. In the short space of 40 years 600,000 had died, and they were not formed to live like the predatory hordes of the Ishmaelites. A race of shepherds must have a place of rest, and where should they go, if not to their own fatherland. This is the hereditary right of all dwellers in tents among the Orientals. They feed their flocks, where their fathers fed them, and their flocks themselves know the way to their places of resort. It is strange, that we should seek to justify a people so ancient and diverse from us in their notions of life, and of the rights and relations of their tribes,

by our notions of property, or to judge them by our most modern international laws, of both which they were wholly ignorant. The testaments and transmitted rights of their ancestors were not recorded in written formularies, but preserved in traditions, in songs, in benedictions, and for these they contended as for their most sacred possessions, as for the honour of God and of their race. Instead of juridical formularies let us now examine a poetical title of gift and inheritance, which we have reserved for this connexion. It is the blessing of Jacob, who had, as it were, a map of Canaan before him, and distributed the country to his children as his property. We shall notice how he places the tribes, and represents their entering upon their inheritance, and afterwards by way of contrast treat of the blessing of Moses; as aside from that consideration this would be the place for doing so. So far as the benediction unfolds personal traits of the sons of Jacob, I have elsewhere illustrated it;\* here it is before us only as a national document, as the most ancient map of Canaan, in which we shall at the same time see, what effect the oracle of the patriarch produced on the spirit of the nation.

### JACOB'S TESTAMENTARY WILL

#### IN REGARD TO THE INHERITANCE OF THE TRIBES.

Gather yourselves together, that I may declare  
What shall befall you in later times.  
Assemble yourselves and hear, ye sons of Jacob,  
And hearken unto Israel your father.

[Jacob does not form a distinct conception of the time, when the prophecy will have its accomplishment. He wished perhaps, that it might be soon after the death of Joseph, because he longed himself to be out of Egypt. But such a wish was at variance with the period of 400 years in that dream of Abraham, in which servitude and affliction were exhibited

\*Briefe, das studium der Theologie betreffend Th. 1,

as the destiny of his posterity. The dying swan therefore looked forward to far off times, but his last song could not but commemorate the land of Canaan, as the land of his heritage, and fix it in the hearts of his children, that thus they might always feel themselves strangers in Egypt, and have their liveliest hopes fixed upon those distant mountains. Without doubt this song, like the older traditions of their fathers, contributed much to preserve the spirit of the nation uncontaminated even in Egypt, and to cherish the feeling, that they were a race never to be united with the nation, in which for the time they were sojourning.]

Reuben, thou ! my first born son,  
 My might, the firstling of my strength !  
 Thy precedent dignity and excelling power,  
 Pass by thee, as the proud waves,\*  
 Thou hast precedence no more.  
 For thou wentest up to thy father's bed,  
 Thou hast defiled thy father's couch.

[A sad beginning, and painful both for father and son. Reuben has dishonoured his family, and his birthright, the honours of the tribe, which pertained to the firstborn are taken from him, and given, as we shall see, to two of his brethren. Judah obtains the precedence in rank and dignity, the sceptre of command, and Joseph the two fold inheritance. The priesthood, (of which Jacob however knew nothing), afterwards fell to Levi. Reuben must receive but a common in-

\*I offer it for consideration, whether this slight verbal elucidation of this passage does not as clearly suit the context, as the common construction does violence to it? What sense in saying, he passes away with levity or with pride as water? and then how forced? Does the dying father deal in sarcasm? and that too respecting the misfortunes of his son, the recollection of which must so deeply affect him? Could the last clause of the preceding verse moreover stand alone? Obviously it belongs to the following; and then the otherwise imperfect parallelism is rendered complete.

heritance among the tribes, and the command of Jacob in this particular was followed. The patriarch assigned him no definite boundaries, and he afterwards received his inheritance without the proper limits of the holy land. How sad, and at the same time beautiful is the image presented, that the superabundant dignity and power which belonged to him, now sweeps by him like a proud wave, and his hopes are annihilated by his guilt.]

Simeon and Levi! they are brethren.  
 Their swords were instruments of murder.  
 My soul came not into their bloody counsel,  
 My heart was not joined in their company.  
 When in anger they slew a hero,  
 And in revenge destroyed a noble ox.\*  
 Cursed be their revengeful anger,  
 Cursed be their cruel hatred,  
 I will divide them in Jacob,  
 And scatter them in Israel.

[The command of the patriarch was fulfilled, and the descendants were destined to bear the burthen of the fathers of their tribes. Simeon was in little estimation, and Moses omitted him in uttering his benedictions, probably because he could find for the tribe according to this ancient oracle no fixed boundaries. It afterwards acquired a few scattered cities in Judah, and was compelled to seek places of residence without the limits of Judæa. For Levi Moses provided also by giving the tribe 48 scattered cities. We have now done with those oracles, which are of a melancholy character. With the blessing on the princely Judah we are at the same time conducted to the land of promise.]

\*Ox and man are here synonymous. The parallelism shows this, and we know, that, even in the poetry of the Greeks, a stately ox was the image to represent a brave man. [This is not the only case in which it is nearly impossible to give the sense as literally, as I have aimed to do, and at the same time preserve any degree of poetical expression. Tr.]

Judah, thou art he,  
 Whom thy brethren (as a leader) shall praise.  
 Thy hand shall be upon the neck of thine enemies,  
 Thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

Judah is a young lion !  
 By spoils, my son, art thou exalted !  
 He lieth down, he croucheth as a lion,  
 As a strong lion, who will rouse him up ?  
 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,  
 Nor the commander's staff from his march,\*  
 Until he comes to his place of rest,  
 And nations are obedient to him.  
 For he bindeth his foal to the vine,†

\*I venture to retain the Hebrew though some prefer the reading of the Samaritan copy. How could the patriarchal shepherd be thinking of military standards, while his sons were standing before him as shepherds, and when all the other images possess the corresponding simplicity. Judah's hand is clenched upon the neck of his enemies, he seizes his prey like a lion, he marches forth as a conqueror, and complacently and proudly satiates himself with wine and milk. Such are the images, which the picture presents, and how came warlike banners among them ? Besides the parallelism requires rather the sense, which I have given. Judah is always to retain the insignia of office, and since the language here relates to a march toward Canaan or Shiloh, the place of rest, the sense becomes clear. "Judah in his march, and his pursuit of his enemies is never to lay down the staff of a commander, till peace is secured, and the nations brought in subjection." That the original word here means not only a commander, but the commander's staff of office, is plain from Num. xxi. 18. as well as from the parallelism. The word corresponds with "sceptre" as "his march" must also with "Judah." This again according to what follows can only mean the *going*, the *steps*, the *march* of Judah. That the original admits of this sense, and that indeed the name of the foot in Hebrew was derived from its motion, its step, needs no proof.

†Though afterwards used in a wider sense, these images originally expressed only the exultation of the hero in his new and fertile country. In this feeling he dismounts, and binds his ass by the rich clusters, washes his garment in wine, cleanses his mouth with milk &c. Of a moral sense it is not probable the patriarch thought. He aimed rather to excite Judah to take the lead in returning to Canaan by exhibiting them a picture of secure and triumphant peace.

His ass's colt to the choice vine.  
 In wine he washes his garment,  
 His mantel in the blood of the grape.  
 His eyes are sparkling with wine,  
 His teeth are white with milk.

[Every one feels here, that the whole picture represents only a march, or progress of a Nomade horde. Judah is preferred to the dignity and power of the firstborn, that he may march in advance of all, that his hand may be first in the neck of his enemies, that he may be a bold lion, and lay himself down in Canaan in confidence and tranquility. The course is towards Shiloh, and Jacob perhaps named that place, because it was in his own peculiar region of country, between Sichem and Bethel, and thereby he at the same time instructed Judah not to lay down the badge of a leader, till he reached the inheritance of his father. The parallelism in the mean time shows, that the patriarchal Prophet had more in view here, than the name merely, and that the term signified also a place of rest, a city of peace. For the conquerer does not bind his ass to the vine, and wash his mantle in the blood of the grape, until the nations quietly obey him. Judah in a measure, though not fully, performed the duties thus imposed. He did not impel his brethren to leave Egypt, but suffered himself to be oppressed, like the others, until a Levite came and effected their deliverance. In the desert Judah (probably with the banner of a lion, in accordance with the language of Jacob here,) proceeded in advance of his brethren; but, so soon as they arrived at Shiloh, (supported also perhaps by the authority of this benediction) he secured to himself the first portion of the conquered country, though the nations inhabiting the land were not, as the same authority required, all of them yet brought in subjection. He, indeed, was now supplied with a land rich in vineyards and pasturage, but a large part of his brethren were destitute, and when afterwards it was enquired of the sacred oracle, "who shall conduct the war?" no other

answer could be expected, (according to this same blessing of Jacob,) than “Judah shall be the leader.” For this was a duty pertaining to his rank, by right of which, also, he had at once appropriated the half of the land of Canaan.—After David the most renowned of their kings arose out of Judah, the images, which occur in this ancient benediction, could not fail to be applied more especially to him, and thus the lion of the tribe of Judah reposed himself in a still higher sense. Jerusalem is denominated, by a Prophet, Ariel, the lion of God, and now the conqueror dips his mantle in the blood of his enemies, as the Patriarch of old had dipped it in the guiltless blood of the grape. In process of time these figurative expressions were transferred even to the lineage of David, and finally, they were all appropriated in one of the latest Prophets, to the future king of peace and blessedness, including even the ass and the ass’s colt. The whole plainly sprang from this ancient prophecy, as the original source. The tribe of Judah always maintained itself the first in rank and dignity. Even in the captivity, the leader of the people was a prince of Judah, and Zerubabel of that tribe was their guide in the return from captivity. Thus one thing is connected with another by the relations of time, and with the progress of events the sense of the prophecy was more and more amplified, as we shall soon see more at large.\*]

Zebulon shall dwell by the sea,  
At the haven for ships shall he dwell,  
And his boundary shall reach to Sidon.

\* I merely remark in addition, that in this way the literal sense of the blessing took continually a wider compass. The word “forever” which probably belonged to the second clause, was referred to the first. “Forever shall the sceptre not depart from Judah,” and thus the second clause acquired an entirely new sense. A long critical history might be written on this passage. The original sense, and the natural progress of the conceptions connected with it, will be pretty clear from what I have said.

[It was propably Jacob's intention, that when Judah had taken the lead as far as Shiloh, the heritage of his father, Zebulon should fall to the West, and seek his dwelling place by the sea; and though they came to Shiloh, and divided the land under other circumstances, than were contemplated, the command was too distinct not to direct Zebulon for his residence to the bay of Acco, which nature herself has marked with convenient harbours along its coast. He did not, however, extend his limits to Sidon, because the conquest of the upper part was not completed, though this district is mentioned in Josh. xiii. 6. as the heritage of Israël.]

Issachar is a strong beast of burden,  
That lieth down between two hills.  
He seeth that repose is pleasant,  
The land around is beautiful,  
He stoopeth his shoulder to bear,  
And serveth the vessels of water.\*

[He was to choose for himself, that is, the delightful valley between Tabor and Hermon, and there dwell in tranquility. There he would find a beautiful country, and fine views, suited to his peaceful character. There among the rivers and fountains he could distribute the water, and in his patient and industrious manner become useful to other pastoral tribes, and gain profit to himself. This is plainly the primary and simple

\* The language here by no means relates to tribute, for how would that be consistent with the image of a beast of burden, the comparison, with which is yet obviously continued in the representation of bearing upon the shoulder. The word in the original meant, undoubtedly, a bottle or leather bag, and the notion of tribute came to be denoted from their bringing tribute in bags or sacks. Issachar came to dwell by the Kadumim, small streams and torrents, which were swollen in time of rain, and here according to his patient nature he was to divide the water to his brethren, the roving herdsmen, and obtain from it his own advantage. That in this region there were assemblages of herdsmen for the distribution of water, we see from the song of Deborah. Jud. v. 11.



sense of the passage, and we shall see, in the benedictions of Moses, how he wished to apply and use the labour of this tribe for the place of his sanctuary. His word was not accomplished; but the passage in the blessing of Jacob was too plain, for Issachar to fail of obtaining his portion between Tabor and Hermon, where every thing, which Jacob said of the beauty of the country, was found true. It abounds in delightful views, and fertile pastures, and the character of Issachar proved to accord with the language of the Patriarch. The tribe produced few heroes, though its long and beautiful valley was often the theatre of war. But this tribe was strong in the number of its population, and even in Egypt had increased to a great extent.\*]

Dan also shall be the leader of his tribe,  
 As one of the tribes of Israel,  
 A serpent shall Dan be in the way,  
 A horned serpent in the path,  
 That biteth the heel of the horse,  
 So that his rider falleth backward.

[By the first words here Jacob admits Dan, who was the first among the sons of his concubines, among his other sons to receive an inheritance with them. This, therefore, could not be altered, when they took possession of that country, but since he was the seventh in order, he was set far back and received his portion among the last and least regarded. According to the intention of Jacob he was to have his inheritance in a region, where from narrow mountain passes he might fall upon the rear of an enemies' cavalry in their incursions, and make their riders fall backwards. A small part of the tribe of Dan accordingly sought the Northern section of the country, probably as the heritage assigned it by the language

\* There may perhaps, be a play upon words intended in the original, as the term used means both a heap and an ass. The former notion may have led to the latter;

and was by no means near to Libanus: only 3 miles. See  
Luncheon. and Judah were south of him. He was in the Sa-  
vannah near the mountains; 149 all the tribes were  
of him. See Kiepert's Atlas, place 22. of Kiepert's map.

x) of Jacob. All incursions into Judæa came from Syria through  
the valleys of Libanus. That was the way of the nations, and  
thither very appropriately, if we judge it by the character of  
its hero Sampson, the tribe resorted. To the Philistines he  
was truly a serpent in the way, a bold cerastes, which threw  
itself from behind upon the horses heels. By craft and a  
skilful choice of positions he defended himself against multi-  
tudes, and greatly injured, when he could not conquer them.  
On the side of the Philistines, also, Dan had a country full of  
caverns and narrow passes, where the tribe, especially in the  
deeds of Sampson, rendered itself distinguished by the artifi-  
ces of war.]

I hope in thy salvation, O Jehovah.

[These words, which have been thought so obscure, and been  
so variously interpreted, seem to me to derive a pretty clear  
explanation from the connexion, in which they stand. On  
the North the land of Judæa was exposed to the most power-  
ful and dangerous attacks, as has been shown by the history  
of the various conquests and desolating incursions, which it  
has experienced. And there must Dan have his dwelling  
place! There must Jehovah bring deliverance to the nation  
or they must perish. In such deliverance the patriarchal  
Prophet confided, and by this expression showed how deeply  
he looked into the condition and wants of the country, which  
his sons were to inhabit.\*]

Gad ! (a troop) troops oppress him,  
But he shall press upon their rear.

\* The original signifies help, assistance, deliverance. This in all his  
difficulties Jacob had hoped for and received from God. He hoped for  
it also for the safety of his sons, when he was obliged to speak of dan-  
gerous assaults. This seems to me the easiest and most natural ex-  
planation, which the context admits. Every other is far-fetched and  
unsupported by the context.

[In the original, a fourfold play on words. We know not by what crowd of nations Gad was to dwell, for Jacob could hardly have referred to the country beyond Jordan, out of the proper limits of Canaan, where Gad actually inhabited. Yet here in a country of Nomades, on the mountains of Bashan, Gad had occasion to show the import of his name. It was a bold tribe, and Moses saw with sorrow, that it demanded its inheritance beyond Jordan.]

Out of Asher cometh bread, that is rich,  
He it is, that yieldeth dainties for kings.

[This passage was too intelligible not to be obeyed, especially when Moses had given the interpretation.\* Asher obtained a region rich in oil and fruits, between the mountains, and near the sea coast.]

Naphtali is a spreading terebinth,  
He sends up beautiful branches.

[This tribe received a mountainous tract, covered with forests, on the Northern border of Canaan, where it flourished like a terebinth with its luxuriant top. And now Jacob turned to Joseph the benefactor of his family, who stood there as a prince crowned in the midst of his brethren. He did in fact, crown him among them by giving him in his two sons the second prerogative, which he had taken from Reuben, the twofold inheritance; and more than this, because he had been his benefactor, he gave him his more special paternal blessing, the guardian providence of his youth.]

The son of a fruitful mother is Joseph,  
The branch of a fruitful tree by the well,  
Whose branches shoot over the wall.

They were embittered and shot at him,  
And hated him, who are skilful with arrows,  
Yet his bow abode in its strength,

\* Deut. xxxiii. 24. 25.

His arms and hands moved quickly.

From the hands of the mighty God of Jacob,  
 From his name, who guarded me upon my rock,\*  
 From thy father's God—he stood by thee,  
 From the Almighty—he will still bless thee,  
 The blessings of heaven above,  
 Blessings of the sea that is beneath,  
 Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

The blessings of thy father prevail  
 Above the blessings of my mountains,  
 To the glory of the everlasting hills.†  
 They shall come on the head of Joseph,  
 Of him that was crowned among his brethren.

[So far as this blessing contains allusions to Rachel and the early history of Joseph, I will not repeat the illustrations of it, which I have given elsewhere.‡ Here it will simply serve us as a map of the region, which Joseph was to possess in Canaan for the two tribes of his posterity. The Patriarch describes it

\* This passage, also, Moses explains, (Deut. xxxiii. 16.) who instead of a watchman over the stone of Israel places the God, who appeared to him in the bush, the guardian God of his life in his first manifestation, as Jacob here names the guardian of his youth, in his earliest appearing. The construction has nothing harsh, if we regard it as the usual abbreviated name of God, as connected with the incident referred to, of the same kind with other local names of God, as Gen. xxi. 14. &c. the God of Bethel. Let one read Gen. xxviii. 15. 20. 21. where the phrase is explained, and say whether an expression more fitting the incident could have been put in the mouth of a shepherd.

† Moses, the most ancient and authentick interpreter of this passage, has understood by the term here used mountains, (Deut. xxxiii. 15.) and the parallelism also requires it. The reference is to the smaller mountains of Canaan, which Jacob looks upon as his own land, and above which, Libanus rises as one of the elevations of the primitive world. The spices and balsamic odours for crowning the head of Joseph are, in the language of poetry, the blessings of the mountains, their costly glory, as Moses describes them elsewhere, Deut. xxxiii. 15.

‡ Briefe das Studium der Theologie betreffend, Th. 1.

in a picture of the life of Joseph. His branches spring up luxuriantly over a fountain where the boughs reach over the wall. He is an invincible archer, whose arms and hands are only rendered the more active by the assault of the bravest enemies. He is crowned with the peculiar blessing of high mountains, where the heavens are expanded above, and the sea spreads beneath, in which image the wish of the father aspires even to the heights of the primitive world. What then were these ancient mountain heights? Moses explains the matter in his benedictions. *He shall trample the nations even to the extremity of the land.* Ephraim, therefore, the mighty unicorn, with his fraternal tribe, was to dwell, probably on the highest Northern elevations of the country, on the skirts of Mount Lebanon. Here was Phiala, the fountain of the river Jordan, by which the fair fruit tree was to be nourished, and here it might shoot its branches upon the wall, and beyond the wall or boundry of the land, and exhibit the active and untiring boldness, for which the father of the tribe was renowned. Here they had the heavens above, and the sea stretching beneath; here the blessings of the everlasting hills, the mountains of the primeval world, from which were to be brought spices and precious things, as a diadem and an unction for the head of him, that was crowned among his brethren. In this way every particular in this pregnant benediction becomes not only consistent but picturesque and local. As Lebanon, like a mountain of the primeval world, overlooks the land of Canaan, crowned with white, and lifts itself to the clouds; as the everlasting cedars, the trees which the Lord hath planted, stand upon it, and its deep vallies beneath are filled with vineyards around the numerous fountains, which flow from them; so shall this tribe flourish, fresh and lively as the vine upon Lebanon,\* as a fruit tree by the fountains of water. The mountain abounds in trees, which yield odorous gums, (from which the Greek name was taken,) spices for the head of Jo-

\* Hos. xiv. 8.

seph, balsams for the head of him, that was crowned. The smell of Lebanon occurs in the song of Solomon and the Prophets,\* as a poetical expression for precious odours and spices. The pass of Hamath, in which Joseph is here placed, as the strongest and most expert archer is the most important for the safety of the whole country, and, according to the figure employed by Moses, Ephraim and Manasseh were to guard it with the strength and vigour of a wild bullock. And who can deny the wisdom exhibited in these conceptions of the Patriarch? The children of his Egyptian son he removed to the greatest distance from Egypt. Those, who held this most difficult pass, he furnished with all the blessings pertaining to royal dignity, bestowed upon them all the honours of heroism, and the invocation of all good from the great and mighty God, the guardian of Israel upon his rocky pillow. There, indeed, he placed the chief reliance for the defence of the country. Below, in the South, a lion, the heroic Judah, was to be the watchman, on the Northern frontier the wild bullock was to stand in the passes of the mountains.—And Benjamin also, a tribe most nearly related by blood, was to be at the side of Joseph.]

Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf,  
In the morning he shall tear the prey,  
In the evening divide the spoil,

because contending parties in the East go out for plunder, morning and evening. He also was to dwell in these mountainous regions.

This arrangement, too, we know was not adhered to. When Judah had taken his portion, Ephraim the tribe second in power sought to do the same, and took what was neither destined for him, nor satisfied him, when obtained. Benjamin

\* Hos. xiv. 7. Song of S. iv. 11. The flowers, the pastures, the fountains, the scenery of Lebanon, are in like manner praised in Nahum, i. 4, Isa. xl. 16, Song of S. iv. 15. &c.

remained by his side. The praise of the Patriarch given to his benefactor was therefore the cause, that the sons of Joseph did not prove deserving of the praise bestowed. In the mean time, it appears that a remembrance of the original appointment still remained in Israel. The Prophet, who most especially prophesied to Ephraim, Hosea, employs the finest images of Lebanon. His roots shall branch out, his boughs shall spread and diffuse a fragrance like Lebanon. He shall flourish like the vineyards, his remembrance be vivifying like the wines of Lebanon. The mountains of Ephraim also are united with the Northern region of Dan, which lay at the foot of Lebanon, (Jer. iv. 15. 16.), and thus Joseph becomes peculiarly the crown of the land.

Thus did the ancient Patriarchal shepherd picture to himself the settlement of his tribes, and the country would have been invincible, if Lebanon, Jordan, the sea, and the desert, well guarded, had encompassed it. His benediction rises like a palm tree, whose branches spread wider and wider, till it becomes at length as a cedar of God upon the mountains. Had Israel gone thither earlier, and extended themselves by degrees, or when they came at length with united and persevering force, then would there have come to be a resident force, formed with the invincible banners, which guided them in the desert, and which later tradition combined into images of the cloudy chariots of God; a perpetual phalanx, and in the midst of it the tabernacle of Jehovah,

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We come now to the sad contrast of the blessing of Moses with that of Jacob. Here the speaker was no longer a father, who could look over the land with a peaceful and tranquil eye, and divide it as his own among his shepherd sons. It was the wearied lawgiver, who saw his grave opening before him, and had spent his life among an undeserving people. Two tribes

and a half had already violated the plan of Jacob, and of the rest he could expect but little good. He clothed his last wishes, therefore, in the form of a prayer, and his admonitory and encouraging proposals in the form of a benediction, which however, should be considered no less an earnest injunction, than the last will of Jacob. The piece is composed of definite and well considered expressions, the political testament of a departing sage.

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**BLESSING OF MOSES THE MAN OF GOD UPON ISRAEL  
IN VIEW OF HIS APPROACHING DEATH.**

He said,

Jehovah came from Sinai,  
Went forth to them from Seir,  
Shone forth from Mount Paran.  
He came from mountains of Kadesh,  
And round him was radiant fire.\*

How greatly doth he love the tribes,  
All the pomp of his glory is around him,  
And every one at thy feet†

\* That the common construction of the term here as *a fiery law* is harsh, every one is sensible and here too it does not suit the context. God comes v. 2. 3. as a teacher of the people, while the tribes sit at his feet to learn of him. Moses becomes their teacher, and his law is the utterance of the mouth of the Most High, a far more dignified image, than when God is represented as bringing it in his hand. I prefer rather to consider the radiant glory of the right hand in the 3d verse, as placed in contrast with the expression described in the second, and pomp and majesty distinguished from grace. Habakkuk explains the image, and interprets it by radiant fire, shooting rays. In later times these images were converted into the *διατάγαι ἀγγέλων*, the ranks and orders of angels, and this illustrates their meaning.

† How fine a contrast have we here of fearful majesty and condescending grace. Only Moses could thus have spoken of the giving of the law. The word used in the 3d verse means plainly, not angels, but the assembled tribes which had been already named, and are again referred to v. 5. They sit at the feet of their father, who teaches and admonishes them as children. The notion of angels teaching is a later rabbinical interpretation.



**Received thy commandment.**

**Moses enjoined on us the law,  
A heritage of the congregation of Jacob,  
For he was king of Israel.  
All the heads of the people assembled,  
And the tribes of Israel.**

**[Thus was Israel to learn respect and reverence for the law as a Divine economy, freely adopted as the instructive lore of Divine wisdom and truth. Moses was their king but only among the assembled chiefs of the nation, and therefore, in a free state. In this character, also, he uttered his last words, and at the same time connected with them the reverence, which he gave to the Divine Being, the dignity and love.]**

**Let Reuben live, and not die,  
His people shall be multiplied.**

**[A small blessing is this, which is thus bestowed upon the first tribe, at all times, but yet a blessing. Simeon is passed by, because, in following the benediction of Jacob, Moses had no land which he could apportion to that tribe.]**

**To Judah he said,**

**Hear, O Jehovah, the voice of Judah,  
And bring him unto his people,\*  
His arm will contend bravely,  
And, when his enemies oppress him,  
Thou wilt be his salvation.**

**[The blessing conferred upon Judah, also, is small compared with that bestowed by Jacob. Yet he is not undistinguished here, and is reminded of his duty to be the leader in conflict.]**

**To Levi he said,**

**\* The people, to whom Judah is to be conducted, is probably the same, of which Jacob had assured him, Gen. xlix. 10. his distinguished and primary inheritance. Here slept the bones of the Patriarchs. He was to give his name to the nation, and this was to adhere to him as its leader. Hence the expression.**

Thy light and right thou confidest  
 To the true, the devoted man,  
 Whom thou didst prove at the place of trial,  
 And strive with at the waters of strife.

He said to his father and his mother,  
 "I know you not,"

And remembered not his brethren,  
 Nor acknowledged his children.\*

So shall they also keep thy word,  
 And observe thy covenant,  
 Shall teach Jacob thy judgments,  
 And Israel thy law.

They shall burn incense before thee,  
 And sacrifices upon thine altar.

Bless, O Jehovah, their power,  
 Accept the work of their hands.  
 Strike down him,†that riseth against them,  
 And him that hateth them, that he rise not again.

[Here we perceive the feelings of the Levite blessing with hearty sincerity his own tribe. He speaks as the brother of Aaron, and honours his memory, not only by recollecting, that God had bestowed upon him the highest judicial authority, but also that he, who first bore the sacred breastplate, was a man of great integrity, and unsullied character. Almost he murmurs against God, that for a single and trifling fault he had contended so severely with him. He calls it an unhappy spot, the guilt of which that upright devoted man, was doomed to expiate with his life, and at the same time impliedly excuses his own conduct. For he, too, was in the same condemnation, on account of which, also, he is now called to meet his approaching death. (Num. xx. 1—8 and Deut. xxxii. 50. 51.) The transition from the praise of Aaron to the duties of

\* The construction, which I have given this verse in the translation, imparts to it, as I think, dignity and clearness. The word in the singular refers to Aaron, the following plural to the Levites, who were bound to imitate his noble example of impartiality in giving judgment, and of faithful adherence to God their rightful Lord.

his tribe, is very beautiful. The memorial of him, who first bore the sacred breastplate of judgment, was to be their enduring model. Their duties are expressed as hopes, and God is entreated to take part with the tribe, which was so necessary to maintain the constitution of the country, and had so many enemies. This benediction of the lawgiver is beautifully conceived, but we have already spoken of it at large.]

To Benjamin he said,

The beloved of Jehovah shall dwell safely,  
The Most high hovereth over him daily,  
And giveth him rest between his wings.

[This blessing is tender in sentiment, and entirely changed from the character of Jacob's. The ravening wolf is here again the same Benjamin, whom his father restrained from the hazards of a journey, and carefully commended to the guardianship of his brethren. So Moses commends him to the protecting care of Jehovah under the frequent and favourite image of an eagle.\* This bird hovers over its young, supports them, when about to fall, and permits them to rest upon its back and between its wings. All this the paternal lawgiver applies to Benjamin.†]

To Joseph he said,

Blessed of Jehovah is thy land,  
With precious things of the heaven above,  
And the sea from its bosom beneath,  
With precious things produced by the sea, *www*

\*Gen. xliii. †Deut. xxxiii. 11. Ex. xix. 4.

‡It is not shown that shoulders (either of God or Benjamin) means mountains, and the discourse here is not of the mountains of Benjamin, between which God should dwell. Between the mountains Moriah and Zion, even had they belonged to Benjamin, Jehovah never dwelt. There was a cleft between them, but the temple stood upon the mountain. The Hebrew text here must be read as the 70 read it.

And precious things brought forth by the moon,  
 The good, that grows from Eastern mountains,  
 The beautiful, that springs from ancient hills,  
 All precious things, which the earth produces,  
 And the favor of him that appeared in the bush,  
 Let them come upon the head of Joseph,  
 Of him who was crowned among his brethren.

His glory is like that of the firstborn bullock,  
 His horns as the horns of a wild ox,  
 With them he pusheth the nations,  
 Even to the extremity of the land.  
 This will the ten thousands of Ephraim do,  
 And the thousands of Manasseh.

[The blessing of Moses upon the tribes is rich and instructive. He paraphrases the blessing of Jacob, and adapts it to his age, and to his own views. The blessings from heaven he explains by the dew, and of the sea by the effluxes of the nether sea, which in ancient physics was the source of fertility. In like manner the influences of the sun and of the moon are referred to the precious products, which attend upon the revolutions of the year and the months. The everlasting mountains of Jacob he places in the East, because from that direction were brought at that period the costly spices, gold, &c. The corresponding word in the blessing of Jacob he took in the sense of a bullock, and invests Ephraim in the heroic stateliness of a firstborn of the species. So also by the ten thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manassah he has reference to the expression of the Patriarch, who made Ephraim the firstborn of the sons of Joseph. Thus the blessing is expressed with instructive reference to this more ancient document. It was however hardly fulfilled, since Ephraim did not receive the extremities of the land for his possession, and perhaps the very passage, which Moses has here devoted to him and Benjamin, contributed to prevent the fulfilment of the direction which it contains. Benjamin placed himself between two strong shoulders the powerful tribes

of Ephraim and Judah. Ephraim at an early period chose his portion in the middle of the country, which was indeed fertile, but did not correspond with the fulness of blessings, which were here described.]

To Zebulon he said,

Rejoice, Zebulon, in thy commerce,  
And, Issachar, in thy tents.  
The tribes shall proclaim your mountain,\*  
Where rightful sacrifices shall be offered,  
For there can they draw the influx of the sea,  
And the hidden treasures of the sand.

[Since I have too much to say on these words to suit this connexion, I shall defer it for an appendix to this chapter, and throw the explanation of the next benediction into a note.]

To Gad he said,

Blessed be God, who hath enlarged Gad,  
He dwelleth as a lion, the arm and the head are his prey.  
The first spoil of conquest he chose for himself,

\*I shall here only defend the translation on grammatical grounds. It is strictly a literal one. That the word commonly rendered nations means the tribes, is shown in the 3d and 21st verses, and that the mountains mentioned must be near these tribes, is shown by the local circumstances which follow, which refer to the harbour near Acco, as well as to the place where glass was first made. Of calling strange nations to a mountain in the tribe of Judah, in order to draw there the treasures of the sea, the text says nothing.

†The blessing bestowed upon Gad contains both praise and censure; praise for heroism, since Gad was the first of the three tribes, which joined his troop. Hence he calls him the leader, and says that like a lion he has seized for himself a fair inheritance, and there already protected he dwells in proud security, while his brethren still wander in tents. Yet he gives praise for the promise made still in future to go forward with the host, until all the wars (the judgments of God upon Canaan) are completed. In the first expedition the tribe of Gad did so, and went in advance of the host. (Jos. iv. 12.)

Because the portion of his princes was then safe.  
 Yet will he march onward with the host,  
 To finish the wars of Jehovah,  
 And to execute the judgments of God  
 With Israel—

To Dan he said,

Dan also is a young lion,  
 He leapeth forth upon Bashan,

[where at that time perhaps the tribe was stationed. The purpose of Moses is therefore to call upon the tribe, and excite them to the conquest of the land.]

To Naphtali he said,

O Naphtali, satisfied with favours,  
 And filled with the blessings of Jehovah,  
 Possess thou the sea and the land of the South,

[that is, on the sea of Gennesareth, at the southern part probably, according to the command of Jacob.]

To Asher he said,

Blessed shall Asher be among the tribes,  
 He shall be acceptable to his brethren,  
 And shall dip his feet in oil.  
 Brass and iron shall be thy bolts,  
 And as thy days so shall thy strength increase.

[The more he uses the products of his country, the more shall his wealth and power increase, and thereby also shall he be serviceable to his brethren. The blessing of Jacob is again altered with reference to political and national considerations. Asher was not to serve foreign kings with his iron and fine oil, but his brethren. Thus Moses united the tribes together, and aimed to animate the whole in their various residences with one paternal impulse, with one self-improving spirit of industry and national feeling.]

There is none, O Israel, like God,  
 Who rideth on the heavens for thy help,  
 And in his majesty on thy lofty clouds.

Thy protector is the eternal God,\*  
 Thou art beneath his everlasting arm,  
 He thrusteth out the enemy  
 From before thine eyes,  
 And saith "destroy them"!  
 Yea Israel shall dwell  
 Securely and alone.

The eye of Jacob looketh upon a land,  
 That is full of corn and wine,  
 On which the heaven droppeth dew.  
 Happy art thou O Israel.

Where is a people like thee,  
 Whom Jehovah protecteth?  
 He is the shield of thy help,  
 And the sword of thine excellency.  
 Let thy foes seek thee with guile,  
 Yet shalt thou in triumph  
 Tread upon their high places.

With such words of golden richness does Moses take leave of his people. He builds their hopes on God, represents their land as the object of his love, that land, from which they looked down from the heights of Bashan and Gilead. Here shut out from the nations, secure and alone, should Israel dwell, nourished, not as Egypt by the river, but immediately by the dew of heaven; and the hand of Jehovah. A bold mountain race should Jeshurun become, and though the crafty wiles of their enemies were unceasing, should proceed, till they trod as conquerors on all their high places. Would that the will of Moses had been accomplished! The country lies apart, surrounded and limited by mountains, seas, riv-

\*That this is the most emphatic word used by Moses to express the eternity and inviolable truth of God we know from Ps. xc. 1. By the words here used and the triumphal march of God in the clouds he reminds us of his ancient wonders,

ers and deserts; a small, but divinely chosen spot, which, cultivated with diligence and guarded by the united force of the tribes, might have flourished. It lies as it were between the three divisions of the Eastern continent, in the boundless Asia, at the foot of these rich mountains of the primitive world, and is their outlet and haven. Above and below Judæa were the routes of the trade of the ancient world. So far as its situation is concerned, it might have been the happiest people in the world, had they used their advantages, and remained true to the spirit of their ancient law. Poor, and now barren, and naked land! in which partly through sacred poetry and song, but yet more through the consequences of misfortune and folly, we know almost every glen and hill, every valley and village, which ages ago in the history of mankind wast famed for superstition, blood and war, wilt thou ever enjoy a better renown? or are the mountains, on which thy Prophets trod, once so fruitful, doomed henceforth to perpetual desolation?

## TABOR, THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SANCTUARY

AS AN IDEA OF MOSES.

To Zebulon he said,

Rejoice, Zebulon, in thy commerce,  
And, Issachar, in thy tents.  
The tribes shall proclaim your mountain,  
Where rightful sacrifices shall be offered,  
For there can they draw the influx of the sea,  
And the hidden treasures of the sand.

Wherefore does Moses unite two tribes together here, and those too so opposite to each other? He himself explains, that he does it on account of a mountain, which the tribes would proclaim for the place of the sanctuary, and of the regular sacrifices; for here, he proceeds, will they be able to enjoy the influx of the sea, and to behold, to acquire, and use,



rare and beautiful productions, the secret treasures of the sand, the glass made in that vicinity. He allures them, therefore, to the place of their national assemblies by the influence of profit and curiosity.

What mountain then was it, which he did not, indeed, enjoin, but proposed to them as a free people? It could be no other than Tabor.

Tabor lies between Zebulon and Issachar, and forms the mutual boundary of the tribes. It lies directly against the bay of Acco, the most natural harbour on the whole coast. The lake Cendevia, where glass was most anciently produced, is not far from it, and the river Belus, so well known on account of this production, derives a part of its waters from Tabor. The reasons assigned, also, suit no other mountain than this, and the very words clearly and literally point it out. The thing spoken of is not the calling of *foreign* nations to a mountain, (in the desert somewhere and at a distance from these tribes,) but the tribes are to proclaim a mountain for the place of their Sanctuary, where they could have the advantages and gratifications pointed out, and such was Tabor.

How judicious, and, on whatever side we consider it, how wise was this idea of Moses! This was in name the umbilicus, or middle point of the country, and in destination was to have been, like the Delphic Oracle in Greece, the central place of assemblage for the tribes. In choosing Zion for the place of meeting in the lower section of the land they subjected the upper tribes to the necessity of a long and disproportionate journey. The consequence was, that they visited it but seldom, and with great difficulty, and on the first favourable occasion the ten tribes fell off from this sanctuary, and chose for themselves more convenient places at Dan and Bethel. Had the conquest of the land been prosecuted according to the intention of Jacob and Moses, and extended as far as Mount Lebanon, there would have been no place so central and convenient as Mount Tabor.

This mountain, too, by its nature and position, was marked out as a place for a national assemblage. It rises in the midst of a very fertile plain, and all travellers agree in their account of its remarkably beautiful appearance. Apart from all other mountains, it stands alone upon its delightful plain, perfectly round, as if shaped by the hand of art. It is difficult of ascent, and therefore a natural strong hold, and occupied for that purpose against the Romans at the time of their conquest. In the lower part it is rocky, but above covered even to the summit with thick shrubbery, vines, olives and other fruit trees, as if encircled with a verdant crown, while the branches are everywhere vocal with the song of birds. It affords a wide and beautiful prospect, and Jeremiah says of a hero he shall move with dignity, like Tabor among the mountains. Its summit is an elliptical plain, a stadium in breadth, and two in length. In every respect, then, how beautifully was it fitted for the sacred tabernacle of a people inhabiting the mountains ! and how much more beautiful the scenes, which would here have been celebrated by the sacred poets, than those around the small and barren Mount Zion ; scenes, in which the fertility of the country, the view of tribes happily united and leagued in harmony, of the sea, the lake, and the river Jordan, would have mingled in their descriptions. The Kishon and the Kadumim, which flow from this mountain, would have resounded in these sacred songs, instead of that small brook, which is now celebrated in the Psalms.

Such was this mountain, as to its natural form and position, nor was it less eligible from its relation to the political divisions of the country. It was situated between two tribes, which were not the most ambitious, but the most industrious and most profitably employed, and belonged exclusively to neither. These were more than any others able to furnish provision and entertainment for the national assemblies. From its fruitful plains the tribe of Issachar could provide sacrifices, and thereby derive a revenue from the products of its soil.

Zebulon lay upon the sea, and could enjoy a profitable trade with the neighbouring commercial cities, as the lawgiver distinctly intimates. Here no rivalry between the tribes was to be feared, for both were sons of the same virtuous mother, and second to none in dignity and worth, while at the same time they contended with none for precedence in rank. They enjoyed their advantageous situation with quiet industry, and on this Moses himself had reckoned. This is plain, if we compare his benediction with that of Jacob. The Patriarch had compared Issachar with a patient beast of burden, and on that account placed him in this fertile region to distribute water to neighbouring herds. Moses, therefore, who neither could nor would look to Canaanitish slaves and Gibeonites to bring wood and water to the Sanctuary, placed this in a region, which had the patient beast of burden of the Patriarch on the one side, and the dealer in foreign merchandize on the other, on both sides means for accommodation and interesting excitement. Where were these to be found in the deserts of the tribe of Judah? and yet we know the national festivals were designed for national amusement and for trade. Its vicinity to one of the finest harbours on the coast would have brought to Mount Tabor, besides the people of the country, strangers from thence at the time of the national festivals, would have awakened industry and promoted the interchange of commodities throughout the land. For on the one hand was Acco, on the other Gennesareth, flourishing communities on all sides, and Tabor the crown and pride of all at the point of union in the midst.

Yet alas! it was not chosen, and the wise conception of the legislator was neglected. The rude people idly suffered the ark of the covenant to remain where it first rested, and visited it but seldom. Every one was eager to seize upon his own possession, and no one concerned himself for the common interests and organization of the combined whole, for Moses was dead, Joshua was now old, and Eliezer weak or destitute

of the necessary influence. Soon the ark fell into the hands of the Philistines, and was entertained as a guest here and there,—until David took possession of it, and fixed it permanently upon his own Zion.

- By thus establishing upon the same mountain, and one too but recently gained as a conquest by himself, his own residence and the tabernacle of God, this monarch, no doubt, added both power and glory to his reign. The circumstances of his own life, and of the tribe from which he sprung, and in which he could most fully confide, made this choice moreover necessary for him. Yet it is none the less true, and the result clearly proved it, that the more enlarged plan of Moses for uniting all the tribes as brethren, by a more free and more central place for their national assemblages and festivals, was thereby forever defeated, and an apple of discord, by the arrangement which David adopted, was thrown among the tribes to their final separation. Ephraim and Judah were rivals for precedence in rank, because in the blessing of the Patriarch both were invested with a crown. And because under the family of David the tribe of Judah acquired an undue share of power and honour, Ephraim combined with the other tribes, and chose along with their own king their separate places, also, for their sacred assemblies. Only Judah and Benjamin remained united; and they plainly because the temple, which was built upon mountains belonging to them in common, held them together—a proof, that, had this been placed elsewhere, it might have exerted the same fine influence upon all, which was now felt by these two tribes alone. The nation had lost its balance; the point of union was thrown from the centre into a corner of the country.

If we look for the cause of this evil, we find it indeed, in a source of itself innocent enough, the benedictions of Jacob. From gratitude to Joseph and respect for the heroism of Judah he had given to these two sons, prerogatives, which were abused by their weaker posterity. It was the injunction of

Moses, that the country should not be divided, until the whole was in their possession, and should then be apportioned according to the population of the several tribes. The command was reasonable and necessary, for if the more powerful tribes seized upon their portion before this, who was to support the weaker and aid them in securing theirs? And how, too, in that case, would an equitable apportionment of the whole be possible? Yet the injunction was not carried into effect. Moses was already before his death compelled to give some of the tribes their portion beyond the river Jordan. We know that he did this unwillingly, and bound them by an oath still to go forward and aid their brethren in completing the conquest of Canaan. It was, however, never completed. So soon as Joshua had made one or two successful expeditions, the two most powerful tribes, Judah and Ephraim, seized upon and appropriated more than half of the whole country. In the mean time the weaker tribes wandered about and made terms with the Canaanites as they best could. The division was three times repeated before all the tribes were able to find their possessions. Some of them, indeed, were still inadequately provided and compelled to seek for new dwellings. Those which were treated with neglect by Jacob, obviously suffered by it, and it was not without reason, that Moses so often impressed it upon the people, "that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children only to the third or fourth, but extends his blessings to the thousandth generation." For what fault was it of the tribes of Simeon and Levi, that their fathers had done a foolish and rash deed? How was Dan to blame, that he was born of a concubine, and almost forgotten in the distribution of blessings? In short, the land was divided without system or equality, the Northern part not wholly conquered, and what was worse the most warlike tribes were settled, where there was the least danger of assault, in the middle of the country. The parts most exposed to danger, on the contrary, were apportioned to the smaller and feebler. From

Egypt, Canaan had nothing to fear, and every tribe was able to defend itself against the Arabian hordes ; but on the North, towards Syria, Assyria and Babylon, it was otherwise, and there Jacob and Moses had assigned to Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin their several portions. Here the frontier was now left unprotected, and hence the hostile assaults, in which, first Israel, and finally Judah was destroyed, came in that direction. The nation, indeed, was exposed to ruin even from the Canaanites, because they were divided, and did not prosecute the war, till their conquest was completed. There was no general supervision, and no wise apportionment of the whole was any longer possible. Of the sanctuary, which Moses had carefully placed rather to the North than the South, no thought was taken, no bond of union was preserved among the tribes, and they became one by one the prey of the most despicable enemies.

In the mean time the beautiful Tabor remained what it was, and in its native pride and luxuriance, as described in one of the Psalms, spoke the praises of its creator. Indeed, in its relation to the political interests of the nation it became (from its natural advantages of form and situation) the first theatre of victory and of national deliverance,\* and hence will forever flourish, at least as the mount of heroism and liberty, in the song of Deborah.

\* Jud. iv. 5.

## VII.

### TRIUMPHAL SONGS OF THE ISRAELITES.

**History of Balaam, considered with reference to the age, in which he lived. Propensity of ancient, uncultivated nations, especially in the East, to confide in Prophetic benedictions, and the arts of soothsayers. Influence of Moses against this. Design of the song of the well, which he introduces. Dreams, trances and visions of the Prophet and soothsayer. Vision of Balaam. Its purpose. Probability of it in the mind of an Eastern conjurer. The language of benediction and triumph uttered by Balaam. Of whom it was spoken. How they came into the possession of the Israelites, and in what way probably they were preserved.**

**Book of the wars of Jehovah. Fragments derived from it. Poetical explanation of the altar of Moses. Whether Amalek or Moses raised his hands towards the throne of God. Song of triumph over the Amalekites. Poetical passages in the Books of Joshua and Judges. Of the standing still of the sun and moon. Of the sound of the trumpets at Jericho. Age of poetry in the Book of Judges. Difference between such an age and one of political order and social happiness like ours. Tone of the narrative in these heroic tales. Animation in the description of remarkable events and heroes. Example in the story of Sampson. Triumphal song of Deborah, accompanied with remarks and an appendix.**

In the foregoing section I have treated of two blessings pronounced upon Israel, from different periods in their history, and in different styles of expression; I shall now add to them another, more strongly marked, than either, in the boldness of its composition, and the crown of the whole. It is the prophecy of Balaam, when he saw the camp of Israel. But the history, which precedes, is the subject of so many contradictory opinions, that it will be necessary to exhibit it with some

care in the light which seems to me most natural with reference to time and place.

When Israel went against Moab, and the king of this people felt himself too weak to withstand them, he sent\* for a celebrated soothsayer to affect by imprecations, what he could not do by the power of his arms. This circumstance has nothing strange in it, if we take into view the notions of ancient tribes, or even of rude nations of the present day, as we learn them from history and the accounts of travellers. They attached much importance to the imprecations and blessings of their soothsayers. They believed that misfortune awaited them, if they had offended one of these, and even ascribed invincible power to the precise words and figures of the curse or of the blessing. The history of superstition among all nations, not even excepting the better informed and ingenious Greeks and Romans,† bears witness to this. That such should be the case in the East, therefore, and among the rude people of a mountainous district, is nothing peculiar. It was one among the imperishable and peculiar merits of Moses, that surrounded, as he was, by superstitious tribes, he directly opposed in his system of laws superstitious practices, and did not tolerate enchantments, magical imprecations, and blessings. The song of the well, which belongs to this period, was introduced perhaps for this very purpose, to guard against the superstition of the people.‡

Spring up, O well,  
Sing ye unto it.

\*Num. xxii. 1. †The latter it is well known had their incantatores.

‡Num. xxi. 16. The Arabs still believe in the power to charm fish, so that they shall come in heaps if they call to them tal! tal! (come! come!) and precisely these are the first words of the song. (See Nubhrs Reisen Th. 2.) Among other nations also I have read of similar words of enchantment, by which they believed, that water could be made to flow up from the earth.



The princes digged the well,  
 The nobles pointed it out,  
 With their scepters,  
 With their staves.

Perhaps Moses caused the place to be marked by the staves of the leaders, that no enchanter's rod might be permitted to approach it. Balaam himself was obliged to confess, "that enchantment had no power against Israel, and that no benediction could prevail against Jacob." Considered in this light, therefore, the story is to the honour of Israel; Moses shows, by the example of the most celebrated soothsayer, how vain, and how subject to the control of God, was this art, which he had forbidden.

The messengers sent by Balak came with presents, and Balaam had a wish to follow them, when the guardian God of the people, whom he was to curse, in a nightly vision forbade the journey. Here too I find nothing, that should be thought strange. Were not dreams in these ancient times honoured and permitted to have great influence among all nations? Was not the mind of a soothsayer, who as he says,

With open eyes uttered his oracles,  
 Who listened to the words of God,  
 And saw the visions of the Almighty,  
 Who fell in a trance but saw clearly,

was not the mind of such a man, who believed, that even waking he experienced such trances, be still more likely to see visions in the quiet hours of sleep? And why should not God employ the way of access to him most accordant with the laws of nature, as he gave commands in dreams, or awakened conceptions, in the minds of Abimelech, of Nebuchadnezzar and other pagans. The result was, that Balaam, daunted by the guardian God of Israel, refused to accompany the messengers of Balak.

Other messengers were then sent with still greater presents,

The heart of the diviner was tempted, and God permitted him to go. Yet however with the express prohibition to say any thing else, than that, which he put in his mouth. Still more to alarm the dealer in benedictions, that fearful vision appeared to him in the way, of which so much has been said. The vision, it is to be observed, appeared to him by degrees. The ass went out of the way, pressed against the wall, fell upon her knees; and now the vision began to appear in the mind of the soothsayer. He hears the ass speak, he sees the messenger of Jehovah with a drawn sword, (perhaps a flame of fire flashing or blazing up before him) and finally he hears a voice. The messenger of Jehovah, who stood before him in the way, reproached him, because, with less understanding than his ass, he had not heeded the less marked presentiments of his mind. He threatens to slay him and save the brute, and gives him finally another strict charge to say nothing but that which God should suggest to him. Thus impressed with fear he proceeds onward, his mouth restrained as with a bridle.

In this incident too I see nothing, which would not correspond with the character of a soothsayer. Let one read accounts of travels in all countries, where such still exist, and he will see with astonishment of what vehement excitements of the imagination they are capable. Their souls wander from their bodies, which in the mean time lie apparently lifeless, and bring accounts of what they have seen in this and that place, to which they have just been. So too of their divinations which are confided in by the people, and at which the most intelligent travellers have been confounded. All in fact look with wonder upon the feats of these men, and the unnatural states, which they assume, and compared with which the vision and trance of Balaam are but trifles. Why then should not the Divine Being, who would now employ the voice of this crafty diviner going not in fact to curse but to bless, proceed in the way, which was the most customary and most effectual upon the mind of the diviner. A fearful phenomenon was to meet

him in the way. He actually heard and saw, in a waking vision, what is here related, and how trifling for us to enquire, whether the ass actually spoke? and how? whether and in what way God gave her reason and human organs of speech &c.? To the diviner the ass spake in a vision, that is, he heard a voice and saw an appearance. She could not have spoken to us, unless we would also have become diviners.

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From a man of such imagination we should expect effusions of a bold and elevated character, and such they are. They possess the highest dignity, brevity, animation and copiousness of imagery. There is little in the later Prophets, and nothing in the discourses of Moses, that equals them in this respect. They stand somewhere in the same rank with the Book of Job, and the narrative, by which they are introduced, with all these dreams and visions, with the fearful climax of warnings, the various high places with seven altars upon each—all this is so simple, told with such emphasis and symmetry of parts, that we seem to be brought, by a kind of magic ladder, to that for which such preparation is made.

#### BLESSINGS OF BALAAM UPON THE CAMP OF ISRAEL,

Balak the king of Moab brought me from Aram,  
 Called me from the mountains of the East,  
 Come hither, and curse me Jacob,  
 Come hither, and denounce Israel,  
 How can I curse whom God hath not cursed?  
 How can I denounce whom God hath not denounced?  
 From the rocky summit I behold the nation,  
 From the Mountain tops I survey them.  
 Behold a people, that dwelleth alone,  
 And joins itself not with the nations.  
 Who can count the dust of Jacob?  
 Or number the fourth of Israel?

Let me but die the death of the righteous,\*  
And let my last end be like his.

The king is alarmed, that Balaam, instead of pronouncing a curse, utters a blessing; and as if this was an unlucky spot where perhaps no sacrifices would avail, or he received only unfavourable visions, he conducts him to another place, from which he could have a view of the whole people to the farthermost tent, in short to the top of mount Pisgah. Seven altars are built, seven offerings brought, and Balak with the princes of Moab remained by the offering. The soothsayer retires again into solitude, that God may meet with him. He returns and says,

Stand up, O Balak, and hear,  
Hearken to me, thou son of Zippor,  
God is not a man, that he should lie,  
Nor the son of man, that he should repent.  
Hath he said, and shall he not do it?  
Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?  
Behold I have received a blessing,  
He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it,  
No evil is to be seen upon Jacob,  
No misfortune impends over Israel,  
Jehovah his God is with him,  
The shout of a king in his midst.  
God hath brought him out of Egypt,  
Like a wild bullock is his strength.  
No enchantment prevails against Jacob,  
Nor any divination against Israel.  
According to the times it shall be told him,  
What God hath resolved to be done.†  
Behold this people, they rise up as a lion,  
And lift themselves up as a young lion.  
He lieth not down, till he eat the prey,  
And drink the blood of the slain.

\*Jeshurun seems to be a term of distinction for Israel, nearly in the sense of *αγαθος* in the most ancient times. It often occurs as a name of Israel, and in the song of Solomon all the lovers of Solomon are *καλοι κα' αγαθοι*.

†A fine distinction between a diviner and a true Prophet.

Now Balak entreats, that if he will not curse, he shall at least not bless Israel; and conducts him to a third place, to the top of Peor, which looks towards the desert. After the altars are built, and the sacrifices offered, the diviner goes no farther to seek for auguries. He raises his eyes, and looks upon Israel encamped by tribes. He is filled with enthusiasm, takes up his parable, and says,

Thus saith Balaam, the son of Beor,  
 Thus saith the man, whose eyes are open,  
 He saith it, who heareth the words of God,  
 Who seeth the vision of the Almighty,  
 Falleth in a trance, and seeth with open eye.

How beautiful are thy tents, O Jacob,  
 And thy dwelling places, O Israel,  
 As rivers spread themselves abroad,  
 As gardens by the river's side,  
 As aloes, which God hath planted,  
 As cedar trees, beside waters.  
 Waters run from their fountains,  
 And many streams shall be his offspring.  
 His king shall be higher than Agag,  
 And his kingdom shall be exalted.  
 God hath brought him out of Egypt,  
 As of a wild bullock is his race,  
 He devoureth the nations his enemies,  
 He breaketh in pieces their bones,  
 And pierceth them with his arrows.  
 He coucheth and lieth down as a lion,  
 As a young lion, who shall rouse him up?  
 Blessed is he, that blesseth thee,  
 And cursed is he, that curseth thee.

Balak enraged smites his hands together, and commands him to depart to his own place. Balaam in taking leave instructs him farther, however, what this nation shall do to his own people in later times. Here the prophecy reaches its highest point of sublimity.

Thus saith Balaam, the son of Beor,  
 Thus saith the man, whose eyes are open,

He saith, who heareth the words of God,  
And knoweth the knowledge of the Most High,  
Who saw the vision of the Almighty,  
Falling down, but with eyes open.

I see him, but he is not yet,  
I behold him, but he is yet afar off.  
There cometh a star out of Jacob,\*  
A sceptre riseth out of Israel,  
Which smiteth the corners of Moab,  
And destroyeth his high fortresses,†  
Edom is his possession,  
The hostile Seir his conquest,  
Israel doth valiant deeds,  
Out of Jacob cometh a conqueror,  
And wasteth the remnant of the habitations.

He then looked abroad upon Amalek, took up his parable,  
and said,

Amalek the first among the nations,  
His end shall be—to perish forever.

He looked upon the Kenites, took up his parable, and said,

Strong is thy dwelling place,  
Thou puttest thy nest in a rock,  
Yet shall the Kenite be wasted,  
Till Asshur carry thee away captive.

Again he took up his parable, and said,

Who shall live, when God doeth this?  
Ships from Italia's coasts,  
Bring down the pride of Asshur,  
And humble the pride of Eber.  
He also shall perish forever.

\* David the conqueror of the Moabites.

† The "fortresses" are obviously in parallelism with the "corners of Moab." If the one signifies the fortified summits and angles of the mountains, then the other signifies the towers built on these, or the men who garrison them. Children of Seth is a term, that could have no meaning here, as distinguishing the family descent.

And Balaam rose up, and departed to go to his own place, and Balak also arose up and went his way.

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What a crown of triumph for Israel ! a crown of laurel, that becomes continually more precious with age. And was this an artifice of the Moabites ? a device for their own injury ? and for the glory of Israel ? If it be an artifice, it must be one of Moses, or of some later Hebrew poet. And to whom then could it be ascribed ? What later poet has figurative language so bold as this ?

“ But of what consequence was it whether a foreign soothsayer uttered curses or blessings upon Israel ? ” Let us consider, that they were uttered not for effect upon us, but upon Israel and Moab. The Israelites, already disheartened at the war, would have been, perhaps, still more discouraged, had a soothsayer so famous as Balaam imprecated evil upon them ; as on the other hand it failed to raise the courage of the Moabites, when they heard such destinies announced. Thus Jehovah here adapted himself to the weakness of the host of Israel, and seized upon the device of the enemy, which was to have rendered them hopeless, and converted it into a means of inspiring them with new courage.

“ But how came it to the knowledge of the Israelites ? ” In answer to this let us enquire, how Moab and the Israelites were situated, and it will be seen, that, as Balaam came from the mountains of the East, he must have passed by or through the hosts of the Israelites. The history of the blessings were probably recorded in the Book of the wars of Jehovah, from which several poetical extracts and songs are introduced in this place.\* Thus we can at least conjecture, whence it came, and how it was preserved. Let us look at these other songs !

\* Num, xxi, 14—30.

When Moses, compelled by necessity, smote Amalek, he began a book of the wars of Jehovah, that was afterwards continued. Only a few poetical passages of it, however, remain. A passage from the triumph of Moses over Amalek.\*

I will blot out, utterly blot out  
The memory of Amalek from under heaven.

The altar, which Moses built, and which he called "Jehovah, my banner of triumph," has in like manner a poetical explanation.

Because my hand was raised to Jehovah's throne,  
Jehovah will have war with Amalek,  
From generation to generation.

It was not the hand of Amalek, but that of Moses, that was raised to Jehovah during the battle. It was supported by a stone, and this suggested the idea of an altar, which was called the "banner of victory." As a conqueror Moses had raised his hand to the throne of Jehovah.

We find afterwards other poems from this book.† The song of the well was before introduced, and a triumphal ode over the Amorites here follows.

#### A SONG OF TRIUMPH OVER THE AMORITES, WHO HAD BEEN THE CONQUERORS OF MOAB.‡

Come ye into Heshbon,  
Build and strengthen Sihon.  
A fire went out of Heshbon,  
A flame from the city Sihon,  
Which consumed the mountains of Moab,  
The dwellers in the high places of Arnon.  
Woe unto thee, Moab,  
Thou art undone, people of Chemosh.  
Thy sons must be fugitives,  
Thy daughters become captives  
To Sihon, King of the Amorites.

\* Ex. xvii. 14.

† Num. xxi. 14.

‡ Num. xxi. 27.



Their yoke is now broken  
 From Heshbon unto Dibon.  
 We laid waste unto Nophah,  
 We laid them waste unto Medbah.

The Israelites invite their guests into the conquered Heshbon, and Sihon. They boast that they have now conquered the conquerors of Moab, and celebrate with irony the deeds of their conquered enemies. Of such irony there was much in the ancient triumphal songs, which can have little interest for us.

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In the Book of Joshua we find nothing like the songs above introduced. A few bold features in the narrative, seem, however, to have come from triumphal songs, and in the boldest of them, the account of the sun and moon's standing still, reference is expressly made to the book of ancient heroic songs;\* and hence it is strange, that this beautiful passage should have been so long misinterpreted.

Joshua attacks the Amorites early in the morning, and continues the battle until into the night, making it, therefore, a long day, and the day seemed to be lengthened in order to the completion of the victory. The sun and moon, therefore, (for he pursued the enemy till into the night,) were witnesses of his deeds. They seemed to stand still with astonishment in the heavens, till the victory was completed. All nature appeared for once, subject to the command of the hero, and

\* The book may have been called Jasher from the kindred word signifying *song*, and if it was a book of Hebrew heroic poetry, it probably began with the song at the Red Sea, and from the first word in that, perhaps, acquired its name. Or Jasher was equivalent to the book of heroes, because it was the heroic designation of this people as Jeshurun, *αγαθοι*, as we have seen above. Both amount to the same thing, if we translate Jasher, the book of heroic songs. That it was such its contents show.

to obey his commanding voice. Jehovah himself seconded it, not only by sending a supernatural, i. e. panic fear upon the enemy, but, when they fled also, by pursuing them with a storm of hail, as if he were the leagued ally of Joshua. Similar representations from the history of the times were at the foundation of this. The narrative proceeds—

And as they fled before Israel,\*  
 The way that leadeth to Bethhoron,  
 Then cast Jehovah mighty stones  
 Upon them out of heaven,  
 Along the way unto Azekah, and they fell.  
 A greater number fell by the hail,  
 Than were slain by the sword of Israel.  
 Then Joshua spake unto Jehovah,  
 In the day, when Jehovah gave the Amorites,  
 To fall before the children of Israel,  
 He said before assembled Israel,  
 “Stand still, thou sun, upon Gibeon,  
 And thou moon in the valley of Ajalon.  
 Then the sun stood still,  
 And the moon was stayed,  
 Until the victory was completed,  
 The war of Israel upon their enemies.”  
 For is it not written in the book of heroes,  
 “The sun stood still in the midst of heaven,  
 And went not down, although the day was ended.  
 And never was a day like that day,  
 Neither before it nor after it,  
 That Jehovah listened to the voice of a hero,  
 For Jehovah himself fought for Israel.”

Who does not see, that here is the costume of poetry, even if no book of heroes were referred to? To the language of Israel such expressions were not foreign, nor was their boldness unusual. How often is it said in the plain style of history, “God fought for Israel.” In the song of Deborah even

\* Josh. x. 11.

the stars become combatants. The sun and moon and eleven stars are represented in the dream of a youthful shepherd, as bowing down before him. The Sun has its place of rest, and knows the time of its retiring to repose.\*

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So it is with several passages in the Books of Joshua and Judges. When the walls of Jericho are described as falling down at the sound of the sacred trumpets, let the account be read in the spirit of that age, and it will cease to excite a smile. With the sound of the trumpets was united the war-cry, and the rush of warlike assault, and the one was only the signal for the other. For six days the commander had forbidden the assault, and on the seventh, when the enemy were put off their guard, by the idle loitering of the Israelites, and the walls at the early dawn were undefended, he gave the signal for the war-cry, that is, for storming the place, and thus they took possession of the city.

The whole Book of Judges is animated with the spirit of heroic poetry. It breathes the spirit of the age, the youthful vigour of a newly settled race of mountaineers, who indeed were often subdued and oppressed for want of organization and government among themselves, but whose heroism and love of liberty now and then kindled up in the heroick souls of individuals, and broke out into a flame. I might denomin-

\* It may be that Joshua had expressed the wish, that the day might be prolonged, (for do not Homer's heroes express wishes of the same sort, and do they not correspond with the spirit, that prevails in the heat of battle?) and when the event corresponded with his wishes, and the light continued unusually long, and the very heavens seemed to come to his aid by a storm of hail, what was more natural, than that the triumphal song should compose the picture of a day unlike to any other, should represent the hero as speaking, employing Jehovah himself as a coadjutor, and make the sun and moon participate in the triumph, and wonder at the boldness of the heroic leader.

ate this the poetical age of Israel, and will explain myself on the point more at large.

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A period of civil and political order, of peaceful security, and established moral customs, is certainly the happiest for a nation, but not the most favourable for producing poetry, that is filled with life and action. This delights rather in bold and striking incidents, in the prevalence of passion, of the marvellous, and of liberty. "At that period there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes," and often, therefore, the most savage and cruel wrong, as we see from many traces of their history. He acted according to the impulse of ardent and unrestrained desire, and in relation to all heroic deeds it is said, "the spirit of the Lord, that is, the national spirit of the Israelites impelled him, or the national God aroused and armed him, the spirit of Jehovah began to drive him here and there," even when the actor was by no means a man of moral worth. It is painful to read the objections, that are multiplied against this book and its marvellous events without regard to the time and circumstances, in which it was written. Every one knows, that all ancient nations in their wars permitted themselves the use of artifice and deception; all rude nations do so at the present day, and, where in other respects magnanimity exists, prefer craft to force. A disorganized and oppressed people, whose national power exists only in individual enterprize, have more especial need of such weapons. For how can an individual even the strongest and bravest, if we mean to speak rationally, maintain himself against a multitude, if he does not gain an advantage by the arts of war? And what are these arts, but skilful artifices? Or is there a less ingenious artifice, a less heroic heroism, than that which breathes from the mouth of the cannon? Let Ehud go, then, excited by Jehovah, and

with his dagger pierce the foreign tyrants of his country. It was more decisive than a victory with us, which is purchased by the blood of thousands. Every thing then depended on individual heroism and prowess. The rude dweller in tents, Jael the wife of Eber, who, uniting with her people, pierced through the commander of a foreign foe in her tent, could make, indeed, but little claim to rank in our orders of military merit, yet deserved, according to the spirit of the age, the national praise awarded her in the song of Deborah. We must first convert the hordes, which made war upon Israel to well ordered nations, and their times into ours, if we would apply our principles of right in war to them.

Qualem ministrum fulminis alitem,  
Cui rex deorum regnum in aves vagas,  
Permisit, expertus fidelem  
Jupiter in Ganymede flavo,

Olim juvenas et patrius vigor  
Nido laborum propulit inscium;  
Vernique jam nimbis remotis  
Insolitos docuere nisus

Venti paventem; mox in ovilia  
Demisit hostem vividus impetus  
Nunc in reluctantes dracones  
Egit amor dapis atque pugnæ.—

Thus do I picture to myself the deeds of Deborah, of Gideon, of Jephthah, and of Samson, and I hold no more prolonged vindication of particular circumstances on the grounds of morals and natural rights to be necessary. The whole stands forth, even in respect to the tone of the narrative, in the light and costume of poetry. Some of the narratives, indeed, as the capturing of Samson in the lap of Delilah, are arranged with poetical symmetry. Individual expressions have a remarkable force, the language of the heroes is full of the spirit of Jehovah, i. e. of enthusiasm, resolution

and boldness. The annunciation of some of them before their birth, the appearance of an *angel, or a nameless Prophet*, the singular proofs, whether of the calling or of the courage of these men, the riddles, the play upon words, the youthful rashness for example of all the enterprises of Samson—all this gives to these narratives more poetry, than many heroic poems have been able to exhibit with all the marvels of their fabulous machinery. Each of these heroes too is so characteristic, so like himself, in the slightest features of his history, that in the brief space of one or two chapters allotted to it he stands forth a living hero.\*

\*I will endeavour to show this by a few particulars in the history of Samson. Good humour, levity and arrogance pervade his whole life. Wine and strong drink are forbidden him, but he yields himself the more devotedly to love, which more than once led him into a snare, and at length deprived him of his prowess, his liberty, and his eyes. "I will seek a wife among my enemies that I may find occasion against them" was a foolish thought, and yet how entirely in the spirit of a headlong youth, who, conscious of his superior power, knows not how to direct it, and divides his heart between love and bold adventure. The riddle at his marriage feast, and its consequences, show the same characteristic. In opposing men he was a man, in opposing women he was but a woman, as many similar heroes in history have been. He answers with levity those, who through his own means had solved his riddle, goes forth and slays thirty Philistines, that his thirty marriage guests might receive their prize, 'deserts his wife, and returns with a kid for a present, and as if nothing had happened, goes directly to her chamber. When he learns, that she has become the wife of another, he says "now at length I shall have just cause against the Philistines, I will do them mischief," as if he had been waiting for such an occasion. The story of the three hundred foxes with the firebrands between their tails is entirely after his manner; and the objections, that have been made to it are not worthy of reputation. The foxes or rather jackals of that country enter into houses, are easily taken, and an idle, frolicksome adventure like this would not fail to engage merry accomplices enough to carry it into effect. They had the sport. He looked to the result. So also with the gate of Gaza, which to the reproach of the Gazites he drew off to the mountain. So with the jaw-bone of the ass, the pun upon which was strictly in character for Samson. The place where he

To this poetical age belongs also the finest heroic song of the Hebrews, the song of Deborah. The 68th Psalm will approach nearest to it, but is still far behind. In the song of

made the attack was called Lechi, jawbone, and as clearly appears from chap. xv. 13. 14. 19. this was a narrow pass, a sort of hollow shaped probably like a jaw-bone. He had made an arrangement with his countrymen, that when they had fulfilled the part which their cowardice led them to take, of binding and delivering him to his enemies, they should remain quiet, since they could not have been excited to any thing more. And when in passing he came into this winding and narrow pass, to Lechi, he chose his opportunity, seized upon the jaw-bone of an ass, which lay there, and accomplished his work. He then congratulated himself respecting it in a double play upon words, to which still another is added, that God showed to the fainting warrior, who after his bold adventure longed for a cool draught of water, a fountain in the same winding rock, Lechi, where the battle was fought. The fountain, as the narrator tells us, is called to this day the caller's fountain or the fountain of invocation. (Here too the fountain could not have flowed from the jaw-bone, which he wielded in his hand, but from something that remained to aftertimes, obviously the winding rock, Lechi, v. 14.) All this is told with an animated brevity, which shows the genius of Samson. The same is true of the sad history of his reposing in the lap of Delilah. His two great weaknesses, love and levity, deprived him of his secret. For he knew nothing more, than that he was dedicated to his national God, whose strength would remain so long as he kept his inviolable vow. This he knew from his name, his education and mode of life, which might perhaps be sufficiently self-denying. Suddenly he lost his courage, when his vow was broken and felt that the assistance of God was withdrawn from him. But as his hair grew he found his cheerfulness and courage revive. His enemies knew this, and when he was to furnish them with amusement, probably in an old, widely extended, and lightly built house of idol worship, he amused himself by trying his renewed youthful energies upon the pillars of the house, thus seeking a joyful death. He died as he had lived, an irreconcilable enemy of the Philistines, and rejoiced in uniting their death with his own. I will not ask, whether a narrative so characteristick, and self-consistent, could have been the work of fiction? I only say, that it is strikingly correspondent to the age, and beautifully told. Precisely that, which is most the object of sarcasm, or most absurdly defended, is the finest. And so generally with the narratives of the book of Judges.

Deborah all is present, living action. In that of David an ancient heroic narrative is to become the embellishment of a solemn state ceremony which still remains only a ceremonial procession. Forgive me, thou heroine, beneath thy native palms, that I mingle in the dance of thy nation's jubilee, and in feeble tones re-echo thy triumphal song.

### TRIUMPHAL SONG OF DEBORAH AND BARAK.\*

Then sang Deborah, and Barak, Abinoam's son,  
On the day of their triumph they sang.

Give ye praise to the Lord,  
That Israel hath taken her revenge,  
That the people came freely to battle.

Here ye kings, give ear ye princes,  
I will sing, I will sing unto Jehovah,  
I will sing unto Jehovah, God of Israel.

Jehovah, when thou wentest out from Seir,†  
And marchedst from the hills of Edom,  
Then the earth quaked, the heavens dropped,  
The clouds poured streams of water,  
The mountains melted before Jehovah,  
Sinai before Jehovah God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,  
In the days of Joel the highways were empty,  
And travellers sought the winding paths.  
The assemblies of Israel were no more,  
They ceased, until I Deborah arose,

\* I have translated this song in den Briefen das Studium der Theologie betreffend Th. 1. S. 111. and accompanied it with remarks which I will not now repeat. Later investigations have given me new views on some passages, but I must refer to those remarks with reference to the connexion of thought in the piece. Whether there was a chorus to it will soon appear.

† The song begins with the figure, which Moses used, Deut. xxxiii. 2. and with which David began the 68th psalm, and Habakkuk, cap. 3. It seems to have been a customary beginning of Hebrew songs of triumph, because they all follow Moses as their Homer.



**Till I arose the mother of Israel.**

**They had chosen them new Gods,\***

**Then war was raging at the gates,**

**And no shield or spear was seen†**

**Among the forty thousands of Israel.**

**My heart turns to you, ye leaders of Israel,**

**And to you ye volunteers among the people,**

**Sing praises with me to Jehovah.‡**

**Ye that ride on asses richly harnessed,||**

**That sit on costly coverings,**

**And who walk on foot in the streets,**

**Meditate and utter a song.**

**An ode for the herdsmen§ to sing—**

**Who water their herds among the wells,**

**That there they may praise the goodness of Jehovah,**

\*The whole Book of Judges proceeds on this idea, and to this cause, in strict accordance with the law of Moses, ascribes the ruin of the country. The principal incidents of the book are however equally original with this song itself.

†Not that there was no shield or spear in Israel, but there was no one who called them forth, and summoned the forty thousand brave Israelites to the war.

‡Those who led, and those who voluntarily followed, are all to unite in praise; they all partake in the victory and the song of triumph. There is a refinement in the beginning and the transitions of the ode hardly to be expected in that age.

|| Persons of distinction. Those who sit on costly apparel, judges or princes, and those who walk the streets, common people. All enjoy the fruits of victory, public security and freedom.

§ The interpretation of this difficult verse commends itself, I think, by its facility, and the connexion of the whole. The battle occurred among the rivers and torrents of Mount Tabor, (compare v. 21. and chap. iv. 6. 7.) and here, therefore, the victory is forever to be celebrated. The battle was fought in the rainy season, when the fountains and rivulets were swollen, and according to v. 21. swept away the Canaanites. On this account Deborah begins with the dropping heavens, introduces the constellations, which bring rain as combatants. In like manner are the narrow passes of Tabor conceived, in which the people were placed, and thus the scene of battle is accurately defined.

His goodness to the people of Israel,\*  
 For there the people of Jehovah were in straits.  
 Arouse thee ! arouse thee, Deborah ! †  
 Awake ! awake ! give a song of triumph,  
 Arise Barak, bring forth thy captives,  
 Thou son of Abinoam.  
 Then went a remnant against the strong,  
 Jehovah with me against the mighty.  
 From Ephraim came the first to Amalek,  
 Then camest thou Benjamin with thy people,  
 From Machir came over the leaders,  
 From Zebulon those that muster for battle.‡  
 The princes of Issachar were with Deborah,  
 Issachar, in bravery like Barak,||  
 Sprang forth into the valley.§  
 By Reuben's brooks was much consulting.¶  
 Why sittest thou there among the stalls ?  
 To hear the bleating of the herds ?

\* The heroine, an inhabitant of the country, is particularly concerned, that the people of the country should never forget the victory and deliverance of Israel. By this circumstance, perhaps it was preserved.

† Properly, "rouse up ! rouse up ! excite thyself, that you may leave a picture of the whole exhibition, which v. 11—15. proceeds in the order of battle. Her admonition to Barak (chap. iv. 6. 14.) is the beginning, and then follows the order of march, as the tribes assemble and follow her. She was from the mountains of Ephraim, (iv. 5.) and there also, was the primary source of the army, and of the victory. Perhaps the mountain, on which she dwelt, was called Amalek, as many mountains still retained their names from more ancient times.

‡ Those that bore the rod for mustering, plainly representing, that the most noble and ancient of the tribe, who gave command to others, followed her in the enterprise.

|| It is a special honour to this tribe to be compared with the leader, as equal in bravery. Tabor lay between Zebulon and Issachar.

§ This is explained from chap. iv. 6. 12, 14. 15. They held themselves on the broad plain of Tabor.

¶ Here begins the sarcasm upon the tribes, which remained behind to v. 17.

By Reuben's brooks is great consulting.

Gilead beyond Jordan stayed unmoved,  
Dan also, or why should he dwell in ships,  
Asher was safe by the shore of the sea,  
And lingered by his bays and creeks.

Only Zebulon jeopardd their lives,  
And Naphtali on the mountain heights.\*

But the kings they came and fought,†  
There fought the kings of Canaan,  
At Tanach by the waters of Megiddo,  
But money, their desire, they received not.

From heaven they fought (against them),  
The stars from their courses fought with Sisera.  
The river Kishon swept them away,  
The winding river, the river Kishon.  
March on my soul in thy might.‡

Then stamped the hoofs of the horses,  
In the fleeing, in the fleeing of heroes.  
Curse Meroz, said the angel of Jehovah,||  
Utter curses upon the inhabitants thereof,  
They came not to the help of Jehovah,  
To the help of Jehovah in his host of heroes.

Blessed above women be Jael,  
The wife of Heber the Kenite,  
Blessed above the dwellers in tents.

\* They were the first, whom Deborah committed to Barak, (iv. 6.) and in whose heroism she confided, and who are here also honoured with the last and highest praise. They with the Northern tribes of Judæa were heroic mountaineers. Zebulon it seems is contrasted with Asher and Dan, because like them it was by the sea, and yet joined the expedition.

† In every word of this description there is sarcastic raillery. She honours them with titles, that she may annul them; and this tone continues in what is said of the mother of Sisera and her women.

‡ She excites herself to proceed with the same animation through the rest of the song.

• || In the whole book of Judges the voice of God is called the *angel of Jehovah*. (Chap. ii. 1—4. vi. 12—22. xiii. 3—21.) The denomination here is probably from the first of the passages, for the angel of the Lord, which appeared there, commanded to conquer the land. The song speaks in the name of God, i. e., as the voice of the nation,

He asked water, she gave him milk,\*  
 She brought curdled milk in a lordly dish.—  
 She seized with her hand upon the nail,  
 With her right hand the heavy hammer.

And with the hammer she smote Sisera,  
 She smote him through the head,  
 She pierced and struck through his temples,  
 Under her feet he bowed himself,  
 He fell, he lay down,  
 At her feet he bowed, he fell.  
 Where he bowed, there he fell down—dead.

The mother of Sisera looked from a window.†  
 She cried through the lattice,  
 “Why are his chariots so long in coming?  
 Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?”

Her wise ladies answered her,  
 Yea, she quickly returned answer to herself.  
 “Are they not then to find and divide the spoil,  
 To every man a damsel or two,  
 And variegated garments for Sisera,‡  
 A prey of bright embroidered garments,  
 Doubly embroidered, variegated clothing,  
 The triumphal procession of the spoil.

So let all thine enemies perish, O Jehovah,  
 But let them, that love thee, be as the sun,  
 When he goeth forth in his glory.||

\* This, too, is irony and imitative representation to the last breath of the smitten Sisera. The picture is beautifully poetical, and characterizes the age in a lively manner. That it was intoxicating milk, is plain from a multitude of Oriental books of travels. He concealed himself in the interior gynacæum of the tent, and there in profound sleep found his death.

† The contrasts of the picture render the irony perfect.

‡ This wise lady of the harem was not desirous, that Sisera should acquire any damsels. She wished only for variegated garments and showy trappings for the triumphal procession of her lord.

|| This short sentence is, as it were, a seal of the whole song, and shows that it is as methodically arranged, as it is consistent with the age and suited to the people and the place.

## MUSICK AND DANCING UNITED IN THE COMPOSITION OF NATIONAL SONGS.

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### AN APPENDIX TO THE SONG OF DEBORAH.

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Brown, an English writer, has hazarded the hypothesis,\* that poetry, music, and dancing never have a more powerful influence, than when united, that among all nations in a state of nature they have been and are still combined together, and on this account have such power over them. Had he satisfied himself with facts, and not extended his theory to times and objects, where it does not apply, especially had he left lawgivers out of the question, and not sought to explain by it every thing in all species of poetry, I know of no objection to his views. The union of these arts among all rude nations is pretty clearly proved; even among the Greeks, the drama arose out of the chorus, or a poetical effusion accompanied with musick and dancing. That in their earliest forms, and within a limited extent of cultivation, they are all three naturally combined together, cannot be denied, for some poetry at least is lifeless without tones to accompany it, and the most simple and natural musick has no animating effect without poetry. Such musick alone gives only a series of obscure, undefined emotions, which require to be rendered clear and distinct by words, or they at length, unless listened to with the

\* Brown's Dissertation on the rise, union and power, the progression, separation and corruption of poetry and musick. London, 1763.

ear of a mere artist, render the hearer weary, sleepy and sad. That both these arts naturally lead to the dance we see by their effect on all children. Musick and dancing; animated feelings uttered in words, require gesture to give the expression its highest effect. Thus there is truth in the language of Milton.

Blest pair of Syrens, pledges of Heaven's joy,  
 Sphere-born, harmonious sisters, voice and verse,  
 Wed your Divine sounds, and mix'd power employ,  
 With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee.

In the constitution of nature our several senses are united and act upon one soul, why must they be severed in respect to the outward objects of gratification? Why should not the inward eye, which contemplates the visions of heaven, be accompanied and confirmed by the inward ear, which listens to its harmonies? And why should not both, in order to their most animated expression, employ gestures to illustrate the imagery, and the dance to measure the musical rhythm? In poetry as well as musick rhythm is but the movement of the dance. The images of the former, express the living forms and shapes of universal nature by their likenesses reflected in the countenance and soul of man. Thus the three arts are so interdependent and mutually involved, that even a philosophical distinction of the several conceptions is not possible, without including each within the spheres of the others.

If this, then, cannot be denied, there must be a point of union somewhere, which, if skilfully attained, would necessarily give to them their greatest power. It must act, that is, at the same time upon all the powers of sense, and either insinuate itself into the soul, or take it by force through all its organs. It reaches that sensorium commune, in which slumber the images, tones, sensibilities, and emotion of the soul, and excites it as with celestial harmonies.

This view of the matter, however, shows of itself, that such a point of union is of rare and delicate attainment. Not all the images of poetry express themselves by gestures, nor do all the tones of musick awaken the dance of emotions. If what is peculiar to one of the three arts greatly predominates, the others in the same degree lose their influence, and the harmonic proportion, that becomes beautiful only by such an illusive correspondence of all, as to produce a perfect unity of effect, may well be considered a prodigy; and it was perhaps best, that each art should follow its own independent course. This they, in fact, did at the moment when each became a separate and distinct art. What each lost by being severed from its companions, it must now make up by embellishments of its own, and studied, therefore, its own peculiar character, unfolded it to the utmost, and now wrought its effects by relying upon its own power, while before this it had necessarily modified its agency from regard to its union with other agencies not essentially belonging to it. It is, therefore, manifest, that each of these arts, as an art, in its objective existence, gained by the separation, though it is alike undeniable, that subjectively, as an organ of nature in the soul, the power of each was diminished.

It would seem, moreover, that there are only certain periods, when these arts could be united in their due proportions. It could be only when no one of them is yet become a distinct, peculiar, and refined art; when poetry has not yet built its airy castles, where neither dance nor song can follow it, nor musick become so artificial, that it would require the voice of birds to accompany its tones and movements with verbal signs; when too, the dance is not so much a labyrinth of art, as a natural utterance of the passions and agencies of the soul guided by musick, as the animated expressive language of gesture. But suppose the separation once made, and each art to have advanced for centuries upon its own solitary course, while the human organs in the mean time have been cultivated

and refined, and their reunion becomes difficult, or rather at once impossible. Place before our eyes the artificial dance of a sensuous people, even the Grecian dithyrambus itself, and our ear is unaccustomed to combine what is so manifold into one momentary impression. We distinguish and trace each several art by itself, and judge it by itself. We fail of that united impresssion, of that rapid association of ideas, of sensuous impulses and upspringing emotions, in which alone their power of enchantment lies.

This period, in which such a union may exist, falls, therefore, in nations, whose feelings are yet fresh and lively, whose life is marked by few but strong impulses of emotion, and who from their infancy have been accustomed to enjoy many combined together. Among nations, whose poetry continues to be the expression of truth within the narrow sphere of their own experience, of their family, their country, the deeds of their ancestors, the wishes and actions of their own exclusive mode of life, and who have been accustomed from childhood to combine these simple objects with all the truth of expression in their natural gestures, with the favourite gratifications of the ear, and the movements of their simple melodies; among nations, whose musick was, therefore, at an early period adapted to the choral song, and ventured but little beyond the sphere of this, finally, whose gestures are determined, not by the rules of a science, but by a healthful state of the passions, and conventional principles of intelligibility, among such nations and such only is found a theatre, in which these magic sisters celebrate their choral harmonies. So soon as the nation advances in its cultivation, the beautiful phantom, which their enchantment had raised, vanishes of its own accord.

The Hebrews, like all nations which have a taste for musick and poetry, had such a period in the progress of their cultivation, but necessarily before it had reached its highest point: In the song at the Red Sea there is no determinate number of syllables, but the words are peculiarly sounding, accompa-



nied with choral song, and here and there with mimic representation. The adufa was the musical instrument of the dancing women, and the obscure monosyllabic words employed as terminations are probably the echo of the men ; for in this way we see children begin the cultivation of a taste for song. They fall in with the emphatic tone, with the last word of the line, even when they are yet too infantile to pronounce it. The times of the Judges were, perhaps, the proper period for the perfect combination of these simple arts, and the song of Deborah seems to be the most striking example, which their poetry furnishes. Instead of Pindaric strophes, there are three leading divisions sufficiently marked in it ;—the introduction, probably interrupted by the frequent responsive shouts of the people, v. 1—11.—the picture of the battle, the naming of the tribes with commendation or sarcastic irony, here and there accompanied with mimicry in the expression, 12—27.—and finally, the derision cast upon the triumph of Sisera, also imitative, until the last verse, probably as a general chorus, closes the whole. As all rude nations in their triumphal feasts celebrate the principal events in imitative songs, so here we find undoubtedly, traces of the same thing.

On this ground we might account for the influence of poetry at this period, without supposing it to include any great degree of art. It was a representation in song of living deeds, a highly impassioned imitative poetry. It was by means of such, that the Prophets wrought upon Saul, and David also with his breathing harp. In our own times examples of this sort are rare, but not impossible. There is scarcely any man of sensibility, on whom some strains of musick, the favourite songs of his childhood and youth, do not exert a marvellous influence even in old age. In times of sorrow and sickness their effect is more vivid, often uncontrollable. How many singular phænomena of this sort might be adduced ! When skillful musicians study the favourite tones and musical strains of individuals, and afterwards apply them to those individuals

with their highest influence, it is known what striking effects they can produce upon them. In nations unsophisticated by refinement such tones are given by national songs, which, with certain favourite objects of national pride and ancestral glory, gain a power over the heart and head of every individual from childhood, and when afterwards these tones recur in connexion with such objects and on solemn occasions, they renew as it were the youth of every one, and reproduce the glow of their earliest enthusiasm. Every one knows what a magic effect the mere coming together, still more the harmony of sentiment of a great multitude produces. Not merely that community of outward circumstances excites a common feeling and hurries the soul, which feels itself but as a drop in the current, along with it, the general enthusiasm of kindred ideas seizes upon them, and the result is that pleasing delirium, at which the man of the world scoffs, and which the cool philosopher equally fails to explain.

If we look at the incidents of these early periods of Hebrew history, what themes do most of them furnish for the simplest poetical effusions, combined with the most natural musick, in short for the pictures of lyric poetry! Look at *the daughter of Jephthah*, as she goes to her death with a chorus of maidens lamenting around her! She goes as an offering to the altar, as a bride to the shadows of death. She bewails her youth, takes a farewell of all that was dear to her in life, and prophesies perhaps upon the altar—what a touching picture, in its language, tones, and gestures! Again take *David in the presence of Saul*. More than one poet has availed himself of the beauty of this situation; but no one to my knowledge has yet stolen the harp of David, and produced a poem, such even as Dryden's ode in the composition of Handel, where Timotheus plays before Alexander. *Samson* has furnished the tuneful Milton with a subject for a very musical drama, and the *Israelites* in the desert is known to us all. *The sword of Ehud* might be wrought into a poem, as good at

least as that, which was sung at the Panathenæa in Greece; for the subject is the same. Harmodius and Aristogeiton carried their swords covered, when they slew the tyrant Hipparchus and restored Athens to freedom. The song in which the deed was celebrated, is yet extant, and their memory lives in the accents of fame. It is a matter of regret that we Germans in celebrating these wonderful events of antiquity have adopted only the form of the epopee, which for most subjects becomes a powerless tale. Other nations have raised them to the character of lyric expression, where they are more brief, more impressive, and more affecting. The opinions also of the age in question abound in materials for poetry. Whoever has read the summoning of the ghost of Darius in the *Persæ* of *Æschylus*, where the deceased king appears in the midst of the choral song, that he may prophecy concerning the destiny of his unhappy kingdom, will have his mind, in reading of Saul's questioning the dead at Endor, otherwise occupied than in speculating about the deception practised by the sorceress. The shade of the Prophet ascending from the realms of the dead prophesies, as Darius did, respecting the fate of the desolated kingdom, and the near approach of the death of Saul and his sons. Why should not the numerous Patriarchs, who uttered prophecies in their dying moments, remind us of Hector, of Patroclus, of Cassandra, whom *Æschylus* and *Homer* have represented as prophecying in the last moments of life? Finally the friendship of Jonathan, the early incidents in the life of David—what pictures for the susceptible feelings of the poet and musician! In short the blooming youth of the Hebrew muse falls within this period of the national history. The wonders of the desert were so far withdrawn, as no longer to overpower, but still to elevate and delight the imagination. They had not yet become lifeless marvels, as they did in later times. It was the precise period, when they were fitted to awaken national inspiration; for every hero was seized by the spirit of Jehovah. This name, and

the ancient miracles, whose fruits they were enjoying, diffused unity and interest over many deeds not otherwise exciting. If all histories could be related to children in the style of the books of Judges and Samuel, they would learn them all as the animated pictures of poetry.

Note. I have omitted here a dialogue of four or five pages respecting the history of Samson, which the editor inserted from the author's manuscripts. The views presented in it are with very trifling additions the same with those found in the note p. 185. Even the additional illustrations occur again the following section. Tr.

## VIII.

### ADDITIONAL FRAGMENTS

FROM THE YOUTHFUL PERIOD OF HEBREW POETRY.

Jotham's fable. Of the spirit of Oriental fable generally. Samson's riddle, with that of Agur. Fondness of children and of nations in an early period of cultivation for this kind of fiction. Samson's play upon words. Of verbal conceits among the Hebrews generally. Causes of the frequent occurrence of these among this people and in their language. Of the purpose and value of such, as a gratification to the ear, or an aid to the memory. Fondness of the Hebrews for clothing new ideas in old and consecrated terms. Whether the time of the Judges was a period of happiness. Song of Hannah. Annunciation of a change of times. Merit of Samuel. Schools of the Prophets. What they were. Effect of their singing upon Saul. Friendship of David and Jonathan. Lamentation of David over Jonathan.

To the poetical age of Israel's liberty belongs also the beautiful fable of Jotham. Like the fables of *Æsop* and *Menenius Agrippa*, it was spoken to the people for their instruction respecting an actual event, and such is the truest and best origin and aim of fabulous compositions. In this fable trees speak and act, for Israel then lived beneath the trees the life of herdsmen or cultivators of the soil. The youngest son of a worthy father, who alone was left after the murder of all his brothers, goes upon the top of the mountain, raises his voice, and addresses in the following language the people, who had made the oppressor of his family and the murderer of all his brothers their chosen king.

Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem,  
That God may hearken unto you.  
The trees went forth upon a time  
To annoint a king to rule them.

They said unto the olive tree,  
 "Be thou the king over us."  
 But the olive tree said to them,  
 "Shall I give up my oily sap,  
 For which both God and man respect me,  
 And go to wave above the trees?"

Then the trees said to the fig-tree,  
 "Come thou and be our king."  
 But the fig-tree answered them,  
 "Shall I give up my sweetness,  
 And my rich annual fruits,  
 And go to wave above the trees?"

Then said the trees unto the vine,  
 "Come thou and be our king."  
 The vine made answer to them,  
 "Shall I forsake my wine,  
 Which cheereth God and man,  
 And go to wave above the trees?"

Then said all the trees unto the bramble,  
 "Come thou and be our king."  
 The bramble said unto the trees,  
 "If in truth ye annoint me over you,  
 Come and put your trust in my shadow,  
 But if it be not so,  
 Let fire come out of the bramble,  
 And devour the cedars of Lebanon!"

The fable, as a species of composition, lives wholly in the wild period of uncontrolled liberty. In the spirit and feeling of such freedom it represents the quiet happiness of the several fruitful and luxuriant trees, none of which are desirous of the proposed elevation. It clearly exhibits the gifts and qualifications, by which the bramble attains the royal dignity, and of which on the first proposal it is conscious in itself. It shows the inward and essential character of the kingly office, as cold and barren, without oil and joyless, to wave above the blooming trees. Finally it relates the first gracious acts of the bramble, the conditions offered to the cedars of Lebanon, either to come and place themselves under the shadow of the

bramble, or be consumed by it with fire. Beautiful fable! full of sad truth for more than one age!

The East is full of such ethico-political fables. What the historians of European nations propose in aphorisms, the Orientals clothe in the dress of fiction or fable. The tyrant, who took from them their freedom of speech, must at least leave them their fables, their proverbs, their wild and romantic tales. These not only commended themselves to the minds of the common people, but sometimes ventured in humble guise to approach the ear of the monarch. Thus Nathan related to David, the king after God's own heart, a little story of the one ewe lamb of the poor man.\* Thus too, Isaiah† sung to his well beloved, the people, a fabulous song of another beloved, the sentiment of which is simply that the former is an unfruitful and unprofitable vineyard, which the latter, the Lord of the vineyard threatens with immediate destruction. The Prophets paint symbols upon the wall, or themselves become symbols, living fables, and when curiosity prompted the enquiry, what is this? what does this witless figure mean? the Prophet explained its pregnant import. Often, too, this is given dressed in verbal conceits.

What seest thou Jeremiah?  
 "A rod of an almond tree."  
 Thou sawest truly!  
 For I will watch over my word  
 Till I accomplish it,

where the words in the original exhibit a paronomasia.

What play of words, too, in regard to proper names, monuments, and historical events, do we find abounding in the historical and poetical writings of the Hebrews.—And as the riddles and puns of Samson belong here, it may, perhaps, be the most fitting occasion to illustrate more at large both these topics, which are so great favourites in Oriental poetry.

\* 2 Sam. xii. 1. † Isa. v. 1.

When Samson celebrated his marriage festival, he knew of no better way to entertain his guests than by a riddle, which he propounded in verse.\*

Samson.

I will put forth now a riddle to you,  
And ye shall interpret it.

Answer.

Put forth thy riddle then,  
That we may hear it.

Samson.

Out of the eater came forth meat,  
Out of the strong came forth sweetness.

Answer.

Nothing is sweeter than honey,  
Nothing is stronger than a lion.

Samson.

If ye had not ploughed with my heifer,  
Ye had not found out my riddle.

All these sentences in the original are in parallelism, or in a word, rhymes. The question is formally proposed, and formally answered. Seven days were given them for reflection, and a liberal reward offered for the solution; clear proofs of the value set upon such trials of wit in these times.

We find this respect and fondness for riddles even in later books. The queen of Sheba came to test the wisdom of Solomon by trials of the same kind, and the last chapter but one of his proverbs contains little else but riddles,† though, indeed, in a different and higher style.

#### THE WORDS OF AGUR THE SON OF JAKEH.

In lofty phrase the man to Itheil spake,  
To Itheil and Uchal spake he thus.

More brutish surely am I than a man.  
What men call prudence I have not.

\* Jud. xiv. 12—18.

† Prov. xxx.



I have not learned their wisdom,  
 And should I know the knowledge of the Holy ?  
 Who up to heaven ascended or came down ?  
 Who gathered up the wind within his fist ?  
 Who bound the waters in a garment ?  
 Who gave the earth its several bounds ?  
 What is his name ? and what his son's ?  
 Inform me, if thou knowest ?

I have already ventured, and I fear without success, an explanation of this enigmatical passage.\* It is, perhaps, more simple, than one is apt at first to suppose, and the reason we fail to discover the meaning, is in fact, that we look too deep for it. The sage Agur is to discourse lofty sentiments to his pupils, but he begins with modesty, that too exalted wisdom may not be expected from him. How shall he, who in understanding and knowledge is inferior to his race, and confesses, that he is not versed in human wisdom, be supposed to possess that knowledge, which belongs to those, who are entrusted with the truth of God, to the holy ones. The wisdom of men is obviously placed in contrast here with a higher science; and the holy, therefore, are such as may boast of a higher light, and admission to the Divine counsels, as he himself at the same time explains by his questions. The true sage must have ascended to heaven and returned thence, he must know the depths of creation, and understand the whole compass of the world, or he deserves not the name.† “And what,” asks Agur, “is the name of the man, who can venture to say this of himself? Where does he live, and who are the disciples whom he hath taught. Tell me his name?” In other words, none such is found on earth.—Obviously this commencement is but an echo of what is said of wisdom in Job, where in the same language, and on the same grounds, it is

\* Briefe das Studium der Theologie betreffend. Th. 1. S. 184.

† That this is the ideal of wisdom among the Orientals, we see from Gen. iii. 5. Job. xxviii. Prov. iii. 8. 20. viii. 22—31.

said, that God alone is wise, because he alone knows the whole broad creation, hath weighed the winds, and marked the boundaries of the earth. To man belongs only a different wisdom, and it is precisely that, which Agur gives. He proceeds on.

What God enjoins is wisdom pure as gold,  
He is a shield to them, who trust in him.  
Add nothing to the words of God,  
Lest he reprove, and thou be found a liar.

The same sentiment, which Job also expresses, that "the fear of God is for man the only divine wisdom."—In the introduction of Agur, therefore, there is nothing enigmatical. Some of his other sayings are more nearly so.

#### TWO WISHES WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN LIFE.

But two things only have I asked of thee,  
Deny me not, so long as I shall live.  
Put far from me idolatry and lying,  
Allot me neither poverty nor riches,  
But give me food in just allowance,  
Lest I, too full, become a liar,  
And say, who is Jehovah?  
Or lest, too poor, I steal,  
And take the name of God in vain.

How beautifully are the two objects here related to each other in life! how true and convincing the mode of presenting them!

#### THE EVIL RACE.

There is a race, who curse their father,  
And bring no blessings on their mother,  
A race, in their own eyes forever pure,  
But yet not washed from their own filth,  
A race, whose eyes are carried loftily,  
And eyelids lifted up with pride.  
A race, whose teeth like daggers,

And forward teeth, like knives  
 Devour the poor from off the land,  
 The needy from among mankind.

The two last lines contain the solution of the riddle, whether spoken by the poet, or added by another.

#### THE INSATIABLE, A RIDDLE.

Two daughters hath the Halukah,  
 That cry "bring hither, bring hither."  
 Three things are never satisfied,  
 And four say not "it is enough."  
 The realm of death,  
 The womb, that never bears,  
 The earth, insaturate with water,  
 And fire, that never saith, "enough."

The Halukah is the Parcae of Oriental fable, probably the mother of the realm of death, and the abyss, which according to Prov. xxvii. 20. are never satiated.\* It is here placed as an introduction, and by way of comparison with the four things, which like it are never satisfied. In the passage above referred to, the eyes of men are also included.

Hell and the abyss are never full,  
 The eyes of men are never satisfied.

#### FOUR HIDDEN THINGS.

Three things are too mysterious for me,  
 And four I cannot comprehend.  
 The way of an eagle in the clouds,  
 The way of a serpent on the rocks,  
 The way of a ship amid the waves,  
 The way of a man with a maiden.

\* In several poetical passages they are placed together as personified beings, as Prov. xv. 11. Job. xxvi. 6. xxviii. 22. Respecting the Halukah as the fate of the Orientals. See Bochart. Hierozoicon, T. 2. p. 800.

The three first are very probably used only to introduce the last. It is the manner of the Oriental enigma, thus to prepare the way for a sentiment. But since the fourth has an ambiguity in the translation, which does not belong to the Hebrew, I will add here a kindred passage,\* which will remove the ambiguity.

As thou knowest not the way of the wind,  
Nor how the bones are formed within the womb,  
Even so thou knowest not the works of God,  
Which he performeth.

The manner, in which man is formed in the womb, was to the Orientals the most unsearchable mystery, the most insolvable enigma, and is it not so among natural philosophers to the present hour? To this, then, the proposition was directed with its far-sought comparisons. It was probably another hand, which added to these four unsearchable things still a fifth.

Such also is the way of an adulteress,  
She eateth, and then wipeth her mouth,  
And saith, "I've done no wrong."

We see here the humourous conceit of arranging together things very different, which yet come under some one general conception. The more diverse they are, according to the taste of the Orientals, the more acuteness do they show, and are, therefore, so much the better. Especially were they fond of tracing analogies between the kingdom of nature and human customs.

#### THINGS OPPRESSIVE AND INTOLERABLE.

Three things are ever to the earth oppressive,  
And four are found intolerable to it,  
The slave, when he becomes a king,  
The fool, when filled with meat,  
An odious woman, when she's married.  
The maid, who is her mistress's heir.

\* Eccles. xi. 5.

## FOUR SMALL, BUT VERY ACTIVE THINGS.

Four things are little on the earth,  
But wiser than the wisest.

The ant race are a people without strength,  
Yet they prepare their meat in summer,  
The conies are a feeble race,  
Yet built their houses in the rocks,  
The locusts have no king to rule them,  
Yet all of them go forth by bands,  
The lizard; one may seize it with his hand,  
And yet it dwells in royal palaces,

The whole comparison was perhaps made on account of the last, when an animal of that sort, (which in warm climates live in the walls, and are very annoying,) made its appearance; for the Orientals are fond of such conceits, and involved propositions, especially in company; as they often indeed assembled for the purpose of enjoying them.

## THINGS STATELY IN THEIR MOTION.

Three things are stately in their going,  
Yea, four, move with comeliness.

A lion, the heroic king of brutes,  
That turns not before his enemy,  
A cock, that proudly treads his dunghill,\*  
A ram, that moves before his flock,  
A king, when marching with his people.

But enough on the subject of these conceits. We see what is their aim; to seize upon the resemblances of things, and unite them under a moral or artificial point of view. All nations in the early stages of their cultivation are fond of enigmatical conceits, as children are also upon the same grounds. Their wit and acuteness of discrimination, their powers of ob-

\* The second and third I have supplied from the ancient versions, for in the Hebrew text the subject of the second and predicate of the third are wanting.

servation and invention, are exerted in this way respecting particular objects, with the greatest facility, and the praise, which the inventor as well as the interpreter of a good riddle receives for it in his own circle, is to them as it were the prize of battle, the harmless crown of victory. I could wish, that we possessed from the corresponding period, the sensuous age, of more nations instead of descriptions of their spirit, the actual proofs and examples of their childlike wit, of their acuteness exercising itself in proverbs, verbal conceits, and riddles; for with these we should have the peculiar current of their minds, the indications of their peculiar spirit. For every ancient people, with whose records I am acquainted, exhibit, in the discovery of such resemblances among their favourite objects and ideas, their own entirely peculiar method. We have such however from but few nations, because these are the very things, which belong to the inner sanctuary of each language, and are often as difficult to be understood, as incapable of being conveyed in another language.

We come now from riddles to puns. Of these the jovial Samson seems to have been peculiarly fond, and makes three or more of them on a single occasion,\*

With jaw-bone of an ass a mighty heap,†

With jaw-bone of an ass I slew a thousand men,

How idle and fruitless the task for us to analyze and vindicate every point of such a punning conceit in the mouth of a lighthearted hero intoxicated with victory! The word thousand too involves a double meaning, since the word signifies also a troop. Who then would take pains to number the slain, and determine, whether the punning hero had not made them more than they were?

When in his melancholy blindness he was about to die

\* Jud. xv. 16. † Ass and heap are the same word in the original.

with his enemies, he embraced the pillars of the house and said,\*

Jehovah God, look down yet once upon me.  
 I pray thee strengthen me this once again,  
 I pray thee, that I yet may be avenged  
 With one revenge for my two eyes.

The bitterest emotion here gave him, what on other occasions was the offspring of sport and irony, a verbal conceit.

Since these are alike numerous and diverse in the poetry of the Hebrews, and since very different judgments have been formed on account of the name, "pun" or verbal conceit; we shall follow the subject a little farther. Verbal conceits pervade all the writings of the Hebrews. Isaiah especially delighted in them, and the poets, who followed, copied his example in this also. For this very reason many of their most powerful and beautiful passages are wholly untranslatable.

I must request beforehand, however, that the term "pun" (wortspiel) may be omitted, and that we substitute the terms, verbal conceits, accordances of sound, paranomasia, &c. By the first we understand usually the low art, which the English call the art of punning, and of the levity of which the Hebrews knew nothing. Their conceits have regard to names, memorials, things, or they lie in the imperfections and structure of the language. From all these sources they pass very naturally into the sphere of poetry.

1. From the earliest times every thing among the Hebrews was dependant upon names. These involved their history, the memorials of the remembered past, the tradition of the patriarchal blessings. If one received his name from the circumstances of his birth, or the incidents of his life, there followed necessarily what may be called, if we choose, a play of words, but one of great importance in its relation to history.

\* Jud. xvi. 28.

We find examples of this from Adam downward. All the Patriarchs acquired their names in this way.

2. When these names were changed, or modified from incidents in the life of the individuals, there arose a new play of words, as agreeable to the ear, as it was important to the memory. Thus were the names of Abraham, Sarah, and Jacob changed,\* and perhaps those of Cain, of Noah and many others. Reference is often made to this in giving an account of their lives. Thus Isaac sported with his wife Rebecca.† So Ephraim, by a slight change, signified either a *fruitful branch*, or a *savage*.‡

3. Especially were the blessings associated with the names of the sons, on whom they were pronounced. Seth, Shem, Japheth, Judah, Gad, Ephraim, Dan,|| &c. include their blessings in the signification of the words. With the name of a Patriarch his posterity associated the blessing bestowed upon him. When the race fell away from God, the reproving Prophet changed also by a slight modification their auspicious to an ill omened name. All this was not mere play of wit, but a means of recollection for those, to whom it applied.

4. What is true of names holds also of monuments, and of cities. Remarkable incidents gave them their names, new events changed them, as the case might be. *Bethel*, the house of God, where Jacob slept, became *Beth-aven*;§ the great stone (1 Sam. vi. 18) a *stone of sorrow* by a slight inflection of the name. So it was with the *heap*, which was to be a *witness*, (Gen. xxxi. 52.) Laban and Jacob gave it different names on the same grounds. How variously were the names of cities and nations changed and applied by the Prophets, who prophecied respecting them. Babel, Edom, Canaanites, Kenites, Ekron, Gaza, &c.

5. The same was true in regard to occurring events, whether in derision or commendation. Those, who rode on thirty

\* Gen. xvii. 5. 15. xxxii. 28. † Gen. xxvi. 28. ‡ Gen. xli. 52.

Hos. xiii. 11. || Gen. iv. 25. ix. 26. 27. xlix. 8. 16. 19. 22. § Amos v. 5.



*asses*, acquired thirty cities.\* *Nabal* was a *fool*, as his name signified. Samuel was a gift of God, by a slight transformation of the word, because he had been asked of him in prayer.† To all this the language remarkably contributed, recurring as it does to so few radical words, and these so like each other, and by the uniform inflections of these effecting so many changes. A very elaborate treatise, which I have cited in the note,‡ has carefully collected these verbal conceits of the Hebrews, arranged according to the alphabet, and the principal variations.

6. Brought thus into this method by names and the structure of the language, and carried forward by the patriarchal benedictions, and the honour of the race as associated with their ancestral names, what could the poets do other and better, than to connect their maxims, and proverbs with this characteristic in the genius of the people and the language, and what they would say to the understanding say also to the memory and the ear. From the earliest periods down we find not only benedictions, but also laws and precepts preserved in forms of expressions, in which resemblances of sound are sought. He that sheddeth *man's blood*, by *man* shall his *blood* be shed. The *Gods* of the heathen are *no-gods*, senseless idols, &c. Isaiah is the most happy in impressing such sentences. *Leaders* are stubborn, refuse to be *led*, the *law* is *light*; the confiding are abiding. The mourners have *beauty* for *ashes*. Among the people, instead of *righteousness*, is *un-righteousness*, instead of *justice*, *injustice*, &c. plain and striking antitheses, which impress the sentiment of the Prophet deeply upon the mind. A part of the Proverbs of Solomon have the like correspondencies of sound, which as it were give point and completeness to the sense.

7. Especially in the use of symbols, which the Prophets see or show to the people, or of words, which they take as it were

\* Judg. x. 4. † 1 Sam. i. 27. 28.

‡ Christ. Bened. Michaelis diss. de paronomasia sacra. See also Verschuur de paronomasia in the collection of his dissertations.

out of their mouths, and point against themselves, we find the most artless and apt paranomasia, though for the most part incapable of translation. So is it with the language of Jeremiah, li. 20—23, and other places. Luther, the great master of the German language, has sometimes very happily imitated expressions of this sort, and it were to be wished, that where they effect the sense they might be generally preserved in the translation.

From what has been said it seems to me clear, that the Hebrew paranomasia is not so ridiculous a matter, as we are apt to infer from the place and character of such things in modern languages. That language was of a wholly different construction, and these verbal conceits had an entirely different aim. The Hebrews had no rhyme, but were fond of assonances and alliterations, to which the parallelism naturally led them. Which then is more intellectual and intelligible, the use of rhyme, which is an artifice merely for the ear, or the varied resemblance of sound to sense, where the word, as Pope expresses it, becomes an echo to the sense. How fine is the effect, when even in our rhymes or in Proverbs, antitheses, metaphors, images, the resemblances or diversity of the thoughts finds itself expressed also in an unsought but corresponding word. Even in philosophy happy expressions of the sort produce their effect, and carry home to the mind with the additional force of the word the observed distinction or resemblance in things. In the suggestions of wit and acuteness they are still more in place, and so long as a nation is still sensuous in the character of its mind, so long as they carry their language with them, as belonging to the mouth and the ear, and not in written characters for the eye, sounds of this kind, as voices speaking to the memory, are no less pleasing to them, than indispensable. Hence among all nations, who have no books or but few, the same fondness for assonance and verbal conceit. Hence among them especially that emphatic and legitimate brevity, that rapid and mem-

orable expressiveness, which the tracer of letters can never attain. Foolish and ridiculous, as it would be to imitate the taste of the Hebrew language in our own, which is of a different construction, and stands upon a different grade of cultivation, it is not less so to judge that people by ourselves, and not to make allowance in these respects for the early age, in which they lived, the simplicity of their language, and the correspondence between their outward sense and the inward character of their minds. Children delight in making paronomasia, and, if they have meaning, in hearing them too. They show, that he, who makes them, thinks in and by means of the language. Poetical nations never think otherwise, so that I might here by a paronomasia apply the address of Moses, (which is itself one also)

A voice of those that answer do I hear,  
They shout not victory one to another,  
They shout not overthrow one to another,  
The voice of those that sing I hear.\*

Among the Hebrews history and poetry rest in a great measure on paronomasia, as on the originals of the language, and only by a taste for these can our ear come to an intimate acquaintance with the spirit of the language.

And this acquaintance is the more necessary, since their writers delight in copying and improving upon each other in whole phrases, which they unfold and amplify, each in his own peculiar style. This, too, if any choose to call it so, is a playing upon words, yet such as even the refined Greeks did not dislike. It was a favourite practice with them to express their own thoughts in the words of Homer and other distinguished ancient writers; and who would not be gratified by it? Both the speaker and hearer are gratified, the former with the successful exercise of his invention, the latter with finding a new friend in an old and favourite costume, a new

\* Ex. xxxii, 18,

thought in a known and approved form of expression. So the Prophets employ the figurative language of the Patriarchal benedictions and the Psalms. So the modern Hebrews employ the words of all the more ancient writers in a new sense, but in the same beautiful forms of expression. Their poetical language, in employing the expression of the Bible, may be said, perhaps, in some sense, to be nothing but a play upon words ; but how refined ! how interesting for one, who has a taste for the simplicity of ancient times, which in this way reappear, as it were, dressed in a finer costume. I could wish, that more of their poetry were known in our language, than has hitherto been, and my opinion concerning it would be sustained.—But enough on these topics ; I return to the writings of the age of Samson.

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That period, in regard to the condition of the people, was any thing but a happy one. Frequent collision with the neighbouring nations disquieted the land, and at length an atrocious crime led to a civil war and the almost entire extirpation of one of the tribes. Famine often bore heavily upon the country, and an occasion of this sort has given us the beautifully told family history of Ruth. In the time of Eli the decline of the nation, which was without any efficient head, was at its lowest pitch. The sanctuary itself, the ark of the covenant was captured by their enemies, and the family of the High Priest came to a miserable end.—Even then, however, the voice of poetry was not wholly silenced ; but assumed rather a new tone. Heroic songs were no longer heard, but the voice of the Prophetic muse] returned. Jehovah fulfilled his word, and gave to the oppressed people a leader with a portion at least of the spirit of Moses. The calling of Samuel in the temple, as well as his history, is related with a quiet simplicity, and his mother's song of thanksgiving, brings before us another Deborah, though in a peaceful and domestic character.

**My heart rejoiceth in Jehovah,  
Through Jehovah is my horn of joy exalted.  
My mouth is opened wide in songs of triumph,  
For I exult in thy salvation.**

**There's none that's holy like Jehovah!  
No God but thee! no guardian like our God:**

**Why boast ye so of your high places?\***  
**Away with arrogance from out your mouths.  
Jehovah knoweth and will weigh your deeds.**

**The bows of the mighty are broken,†  
And they, that wavered, are girded with strength.  
Those, that were full, are begging for bread,  
Those, that were hungry, are now at rest,  
She, that was barren, hath sevenfold fruit,  
She, that had many sons, is now bereft of help.**

**Jehovah killeth, and he maketh alive,  
He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.  
Jehovah maketh poor and maketh rich,  
He bringeth low and lifteth up again.**

**He raiseth up the lowly from the dust,  
And lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill,  
That he may seat them with the princes,  
And make them heirs to princely thrones.‡**

**For the fountains of the earth are Jehovah's,  
The world hath he established thereon.  
The footsteps of the faithful hath he assured,  
But the wicked are dumb in obscurity,  
For not by strength do heroes triumph.**

**Jehovah's adversaries shall be dashed in pieces,  
When he from heaven shall thunder on them,  
Jehovah shall judge the whole of his land,**

\* They strengthened themselves in these, and became self-confident. Asaph in Ps. lxxv. 6. has imitated, and beautifully varied this expression, as well as the whole song.

† A new period of tranquillity is beginning, in which even the feeble and the poor shall enjoy happiness. This she illustrates from her own history.

‡ As Samuel, when he was judge of the nation. The following lines are very applicable to him, and the family of Eli, though I would not restrict their more general sense.

**Shall give his king heroick strength,  
And far exalt the power of his anointed.**

Whether Hannah uttered this song, or is merely represented as uttering it, it is enough, that it anticipates and predicts different times from what were then experienced. The storms of war were passed away. The insolence of individuals, exalted in power and privilege, was at an end; and God had given to others the song of triumph. Freed at length from the shame of barrenness, she sees her son rising from his low condition to take his seat with princes, as one of the nobles of the land, as a judge of the people. The family of Eli sinks into obscurity while he rises to distinction. By him Jehovah judges the whole country, even to its borders, and through his means, too, anoints over Israel a brave and fortunate king. Such is the tone of this song, and it became the model for many Psalms, resembling it both in style and matter; for it was a prediction of what was always the favourite topic of the nation, a new and happier era.

This happier era Samuel established at least prospectively. He was the first Prophet after Moses, who exerted an influence on the political organization of the state. God called him not by a vision, but by a distinct voice, in which he signified to him the downfall of the vicious and indolent family of priests, which had hitherto ruled. His answers were always distinct and determinate, and hence he was denominated a Seer, instead of a Prophet. The expression continued in use for a considerable period, and even David retained his Seers, until Prophets again appeared.

It is undeniable, that Samuel employed the first tranquil period in the organization of the state, as far as he was able, for commencing also the intellectual cultivation of his people. He established the schools of the Prophets;\* and though we

\* The word used, 2 Sam. vii. 8. means a shepherd's cottage or fold, but the Prophets we know lived in the most simple manner.

need not adopt the extravagant conceptions sometimes formed of them, yet their organization by Samuel was marked with wisdom. He sought to bring the arts of cultivation, which then consisted of musick and poetry, from the exclusive possession of a single tribe into general use. “The hill of God”<sup>\*</sup> resounded with the songs of the Prophets, i. e. the pupils of a free system of national instruction and wisdom. They dwelt in simple cottages, which have been very incorrectly translated schools, and conveyed the notion of something corresponding to our own schools of learning. They were simply assemblages of young men, or those of maturer age, practising themselves under the direction of Samuel, who was the judge and father of the state, in what then pertained to national cultivation, not therefore, in ravings concerning futurity, nor in barren litanies connected with the service of the temple. When they met Saul, by the sentiment and lofty style of their songs they inspired him with the first feelings worthy the heart of a king,<sup>†</sup> and these alas! continued only till his regal power was established. In their songs, which probably sung of his own regal dignity, the humble herdsman first felt himself inspired with more elevated thoughts, and more daring resolution; and even in later times, when in pursuit of David, he forgot even his mortal foe, seated himself among them naked, i. e. in the simple dress of a Prophet divested of his regal ornaments, and touched the strings of his own forgotten harp.— Would that some specimens, at least, remained to us from these hills of God, these airy elevations, vocal with national songs, and the poetry of nature! But they are lost in oblivion. The association of poetry with the residence, the court,

<sup>\*</sup> 1 Sam. x. 5.

<sup>†</sup> The passage has been rendered ridiculous by being misinterpreted. It was not by the sound of their instruments, that they gave Saul the heart of a king, but by the sentiment of their songs accompanied with the sound.

and the temple of David soon rendered these hills silent and desolate, brought every thing within a narrow compass, and those ancient songs of war and victory, those fables, and unconfin'd songs of the Prophets of Samuel—were lost forever.

Yet the germ, and the earliest flowers of the poetry of David belong also to these times. The pastures of his flocks were vocal with the songs of his youthful Muse, and by these he gained access to the king and to the friendship of Jonathan. But this period in the history of David is characterised more by the friendship between him and Jonathan, than by all his poetical effusions. David appears before Jonathan a youth, and after a deed of daring enterprize, which the latter could not himself accomplish. Yet, instead of envying, he conceives for him a sentiment of affection. “His soul was knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul.”\* He justified him, also, to his father, (even by representations not entirely true, and which might have fallen upon his own head). He set honour and life at stake; disregarding the impression made, that he gave up the throne from want of enterprise, and even the derogatory epithets bestowed upon him by his father; for he was indeed a true and genuine hero. I seem even now to see them, as before the face of heaven, with kisses and tears, they confirm by an oath their perpetual covenant,† and Jonathan, as, after a long absence, he comes to his friend in the desert, encourages him, and says,‡ “fear not David, the hand of my father shall not find thee. Thou shalt be king over Israel and I shall be next unto thee.” What heroick friendship was this! He offered up the throne to him, that as a friend he might continue nearest his person. Only an age of poetry, and souls like Jonathan’s, but rarely found, are capable of such a covenant of love and fidelity. When Jonathan died and left the throne to his friend, what could that friend give him for all the kindness, which he had shown him,

\* 1 Sam. xviii. 1.

† 1 Sam. xx. 41.

‡ 1 Sam. xxiii. 16.



but an elegy upon his tomb? an elegy, in which, however, beautiful as it is, the memory of Saul and that of Jonathan live united, as if both had equal claims upon his heart. I know, indeed, it was written for the people,\* but for myself I could have wished, that it might be written for David and for Jonathan alone, not for Saul and the people. And his son Mophibosheth—what apology can be found for David, that he so readily sacrificed this son of the friend of his youth to a false accusation, and, when it was proved to be false, instead of restoring him threefold, merely divided what had been taken from him between him and his base accuser?† And how lamentable, too, that he must give up the sons of Saul, who yet were all of them brothers of Jonathan, in compliance with the cruel request of a city, to a death so shameful!‡ Here is the beautiful elegy of David on Saul and Jonathan. To me the heart of Jonathan remains sacred, and may his name forever adorn the altar of friendship.

### DAVID'S LAMENTATION

#### FOR JONATHAN, HIS FRIEND.

Beautiful Roe, thou pride and glory of Israel!

Thus then art thou wounded upon thy high places!

**CHORUS.** Fallen, fallen are the heroes!

How are the heroes fallen?

Tell ye it not in Gath,

Publish it not in the streets of Askelon,

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised leap for joy,

Ye mountains of Gilboa, on you henceforth

Let no more rain nor dew descend forever.

No more on you, ye mountains blighted with a curse,

For there the shield of heroes was struck down,

\* 2 Sam. i. 17. 18.

† 2 Sam. xvi. 4. xix. 29.

‡ 2 Sam. xxi. 8—10. where the beautiful account of Rizpah, the moth-  
er of two of the sons of Saul, is related. Every one is reminded by it  
of the Antigone of Sophocles.

The shield of Saul, as of one unconsecrated with oil.

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the strong,

The bow of Jonathan never turned backward,

The sword of Saul returned not empty.' (It reached the blood of the slain.)

Saul and Jonathan, dear to each other in life,

They went undivided in love to the realm of shades.

Swifter than eagles, bolder were they than lions.

Daughters of Israel, weep ye for Saul,

No more will he clothe you in garments of purple,

Nor deck your apparel with ornaments of gold.

CHORUS. *Ah ! how are the heroes fallen in the midst of battle,*

*Jonathan, thou lovely Roe, slain on thy high places.*

I am afflicted for thee, my brother Jonathan,

Lovely wast thou to me, exceeding lovely,

Yea, my love for thee surpassed the love of women.

CHORUS. *Ah ! how are the heroes fallen,*

*And their weapons of war perished.*

NOTE. I have omitted a more literal version of the lamentation of David inserted by the German Editor. The sense as given by him, where it differs from the above agrees with the version of the English Bible. That version, is indeed, very true to the original, and not the less poetical on that account. Tr.

## IX.

**History of David as the author of the Psalms. How this kind of poetry came into use by his means. In what relation it stood to the more ancient poetry. Perversion of the Psalms in the common use made of them. The proper and natural view to be taken, of them. Rules for using them aright. How far the common division of the Psalms into higher, middle, and lower is to be regarded. Division of them according to their lyrical character. Psalms expressive of a single sentiment or picture. Examples. Psalms comprehending several contrasted sentences and members. Examples. Psalms expressive of emotion, and didactick Psalms. Examples. Services of a German poet in transferring the poetical tone of the Psalms into our language.**

In the time of David the Lyric poetry of the Hebrews attained its highest splendour. The scattered wild flowers of the country were now gathered and planted, as a royal garland, upon Mount Zion. From his youth upward the mind of David had been attuned to musick and poetry. He had spent the happiest years of youth, as a tender of flocks, and amidst their rural haunts. There he had gathered those flowers of pastoral poetry, which often adorn, also, his heroick Psalms, and even those expressive of sadness and affliction. By musick, with which was then combined not only poetry, but whatever of cultivation belonged to the age, he had first found access to the person of the king. This circumstance, undoubtedly, contributed to make him cultivate and strengthen still more the powers of his Muse. Soon after, as if the same art was to be for him the occasion both of good and evil fortune, in consequence of the triumphal song of the women, who went out to meet him, he was regarded as the rival of Saul, and in several instances scarcely escaped, with his harp

in his hand, the javelin of the king. He betook himself to flight, and for years either alone or with a few companions, wandered about the deserts of Judæa, and was like a bird upon the mountains. Here his harp became his comforter and friend. To it he uttered the complaints, which he could confide to none else. It calmed his fears, made him forget his misery, as once it had subdued the evil spirit in Saul, and made him forget his envy and vexation. From it he now drew forth tones, which were an echo to his feelings in sorrow and in joy, and the most tender and impassioned among them were prayers ; prayers by which his courage was excited, his hope confirmed, until in the providence of God he triumphed over all. Now his harp became in his royal hands consecrated as a thankoffering to the publick. Not merely that he himself, as he had often promised, made publick the prayers relating to his own distress and deliverance ; he organized and devoted, in a far greater measure than had before been done, musick and poetry for celebrating the service of God, and promoting the magnificence of the temple. Four thousand Levites, distinguished by a peculiar dress, were arranged in classes and choirs under master-singers, of whom the three most distinguished, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun are known to us by specimens of their art. The children of Korah, probably, belonged to the middle class. David employed himself even as king to increase the treasures of this temple musick. Dangers and triumphs, especially the very great danger and affliction experienced from the rebellion of Absalom, awakened again the slumbering tones of his youthful harp, to sing of royal cares and troubles. Every important measure which he adopted, especially the consecration of Mount Zion, was brought into general notice, and placed in a clear light by his own poetical effusions, and those of the poets employed under his patronage. In his Psalms his whole kingdom still lives. These were sung at the publick festivals. Dazzled with the magnificence of the king and the royal city,

the people sung them with enthusiasm. They were treasured up and preserved as royal Psalms ; every thing, which could be, was included and arranged as such ; and these were imitated as far as possible by other writers. The poets patronized by David, followed the splendid example of their king, not by devoting themselves to song merely, but by doing so in the same spirit and style, which he had adopted ; and why should not the succeeding ages, in which David was become a sacred name, the father of the whole race of kings, and associated with the future hopes of the nation—why should they not follow so glorious a model ? Even the Prophets imitated him, because David was the favourite name among the people, because his Psalms were the song book of the nation, wherever it took part in Divine worship, in musick and poetry. In this way was formed the collection, which we have under the name of David's Psalms. Not all are his or of his age. Only an individual song of Moses, however, is from more ancient times, and later writers obviously followed him as their model, even when they did not ascribe their songs to himself. The superscription ascribing them to David, where it stands without farther limitation, seems to be as indefinite in its import, as the ascription to Solomon of whatever proverbs and delicious songs belong in any sense to his age, or correspond with his character. In short, this greatest and most renowned king of Israel succeeded in uniting the garland of lyric poetry with the triumphal and regal crown, and among the Hebrews a beautiful song is synonymous with a song of David.

It is, therefore, undeniable that David greatly refined and beautified the lyric poetry of the Hebrews. Instructive exhibitions of the attributes of God, of human nature, of individual virtues and vices, of the happiness of the upright, and the misery of the wicked, commenced with the Psalms, for in the law of Moses and in the wild and uncultivated period of the Judges they had scarcely found a place. The warlike

trumpet was softened to a milder tone by the song of the shepherd's flute, and the more touching harp of the mourner ; for harsh as the sentiments are, which still occur in some of the warlike Psalms, yet the general tendency is undeniably to a style and character of greater gentleness and refinement. The pomp of royalty, and the imposing arrangements of a civil government, were to be celebrated, and these softened and controlled the sacred fury of the ancient Muse. The history of other nations also teaches us that, in order to a splendid national poetry it requires the splendours of a king, whose reign at once furnishes by its deeds rich material for song, and secures the order and tranquillity necessary for using the treasures thus provided. The reign of David formed this period of the classick poetry of the Hebrews, which furnished models for Solomon and the Prophets.

In the mean time it must be acknowledged, that while these advantages were gained, the rude strength, the animated movement, and the lofty sound, of the ancient poetry was in some measure lost. We seek in vain in the Psalms for songs like those of Moses and Deborah, figurative language like that of Job, Balaam and Jotham. Uniformity obviously prevails in them, because every thing was made to revolve around Mount Zion, and confined to the sphere marked out by the models, which David had furnished, and by his style of thought. That hill of the Prophets, full of the free-breathing poetry of nature, was now silent and desolate. The Seers of David were no poets, the regularly commissioned Asaph prophesied only upon his harp, and it was not till centuries had passed away, that the poetry of the Prophets revived. Thus every thing in this world has its course, and every human regulation its different sides of good and evil. What poetry gained in religious, political, and lyric cultivation, it lost perhaps in natural vigour and freshness.

No book of Scripture, except the Song of Solomon, has suffered so many misinterpretations and perversions from its

original sense, as the book of Psalms. As David in his own age gave his own feelings and sentiments general currency, and rendered his own style the predominant one in the songs of the temple; so the book was destined to become the book of devotional song for every age, for all nations, and all hearts, though they had no connexion either with the spirit or the deeds of David. What else could result from this, but a great extension of the sense of the author, and an application of his language to objects and feelings very different from those, which it originally designated? Every commentator, every versifier found here his own age, the wants of his own soul, his own domestic and family relations, and on this ground adapted it to the singing and reading of his own church. In that all the Psalms of David were sung, as if every member of the church had wandered upon the mountains of Judah, and been persecuted by Saul. They sung with zeal against Doeg and Ahitophel, imprecated curses upon the Edomites and the Moabites, and where they could do no more they put the imprecations in the mouth of Him, who never returned railing for railing, nor threatening for injustice. Let one read the most individualized, the most characteristically beautiful songs of David, of Asaph and of Korah, in many versifications of them, then turn back to the original situations and sources of the feelings which they depict, and will he find them always retaining even a shadow of their ancient form?

In order to attain a clear view of the Psalms, as lyric poems of the age of David, the following particulars are indispensable.

1. That we forget all modern imitations, and commentators, even though most highly prized, and the best for their own times. They read them in accordance with the purpose, at which they aimed, each for his own age, and with an application to this of the language, the consolations, and instructions of the book. Our aim is to see it in its circumstan-

oes of times and place, and in these the heart, and understanding of David, and the poets associated with him.

2. In accordance with this aim the first inquiry should be for the objects and situations, in reference to which these songs were severally composed. These are given at the head of many of the Psalms; in others they are determined by the contents, and in others still it must be left undetermined. Two things here, however, must be guarded against. In the first place, that we do not insist upon finding a Psalm for every trifling event in the life of David, nor invent for every figurative expression in the Psalms a corresponding situation in his life. The first has been done in relation to David, just as in relation to other lyric poets. A locality is sought for every thing, and a memorial for every event. In pursuit of the second, to find a situation, to which every word refers, strange things have been imagined, of which the interpreter indeed might know something, but of which the poet certainly knew nothing.

3. We must study the peculiar language of David and his contemporaries, by comparing the different Psalms with each other, and with the history of the age. That the royal poet had his favourite expressions, needs no proof; and they may all be explained from the situations in which he was placed. "The Lord is my shield, he is on my right hand, he setteth me in a wide place, he leadeth me to high places," &c., are of this kind, and a series of others, which in part with some modification of sense were for centuries current in the church. A collection of poetical idioms for all these songs would be a useful book, and indeed we are in need of a similar collection for all the principal writers of the Old Testament.

4. We should regard the feelings that prevail in the Psalms neither as an enemy, nor yet as blind defenders of them. They exhibit the characteristic traits of individual men, and as such should be explained, without being dressed up as a model of holy feelings for all men. David had his peculiar



feelings and cares, both as an exiled wanderer, and as a king. We are neither of these, and need therefore, neither imprecate curses upon enemies, whom we have not, nor magnify ourselves as their conquerors; but we must learn at the same time to understand and appreciate these feelings. The Scripture itself gives us a rich commentary on the subject, for it does not disguise the character of David, even in regard to his failings. The man who sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba, may also be too hasty in his language. He was rash, oppressed and a warrior. He spake often not in his own name, but in the name of his people, as a father of his country. But always, and in all circumstances, he was a man. His songs illustrate his history, and his history aids the interpretation of his songs; but he, that aims to see every where in them the superhuman and unearthly, will at last see nothing distinctly.

5. Again, in studying these as specimens of art, we must take no examples from other nations and languages, as models, by which to judge of them; for the composition of such effusions must be judged with reference to the peculiar nature of the feelings, sentiments and language, out of which they have grown. To what does it amount, indeed, when we say, that this or that Psalm is Pindaric? merely that it contains bold transitions, lofty sentiments, and historical allusions? and must not the same necessarily be found in all laudatory odes? Yet, in regard to the art of composition, David has nothing more than this in common with Pindar. The language of Pindar's lyric poetry, his periods, and metrical arrangement, the mode of treating his subjects, derived from mythology and ancient history, and the nature of his subjects themselves, hardly admit of a comparison, and we are sure to draw false conclusions, when we suffer ourselves to be blinded by the word chorus. A Hebrew is by no means the same thing with a Grecian chorus.

6. Still less should the style of David be judged by the rules

of lyrick poetry formed in our own age, and not applicable even to all the odes of Horace, though from these they are professedly abstracted. The critick, who formed them, had for the most part, too narrow views, was not extensively acquainted with the lyrical treasures of different languages, confined himself to a few favourite specimens, and by these framed his general rules. How then can they be expected to apply to an entirely different age? to situations and languages far more simple? Where the rules are true, they occasion no constraint, but flow spontaneously from the nature of the emotions, and the impression upon the heart of the object which the poet represents. The characteristic traits of the poet, of the situation, and the language, unite their influence in the result produced. The rules, therefore, always require actual experience of their truth, and yet admit of this test but partially. In short, where they are true, who would not rather, in reading a poetical effusion, feel and unfold them himself, by his own original experience, than borrow them from foreign models and arts of poetry, and thus violate the primitive simplicity of ancient song, by the artificial subtleties of modern invention. Whoever is not qualified to feel the beauty of musical and harmonious poetry, unaided and of himself, will never learn to feel it by force of artificial rules.

7. We must unfold and experience in ourselves the original nature and beauty of the Hebrew lyrick poetry. The teacher should lead the scholar to observe—what is its particular objects represented—what is the interest attached to it—in what manner it is presented—what feeling prevails in the piece—what style and movement it holds—into what train of sentiment it expands itself—how it begins, proceeds and ends. The more simply and impressively this is pointed out to the youthful reader, without the technicalities of art, and without enthusiastick warmth of commendation, the more will the poetry find its way to his heart. What is beautiful in it he will love without noisy commendation; original strains of im-

passioned feeling will of themselves make their impression upon him, and, if he has a spark of lyric feeling in his bosom, Jehovah will give him inspiration. In Hebrew lyric poetry, simplicity, in this development of it, is especially necessary, since of all poetry it was least constructed by rule, and as a work of art, and was rather poured forth spontaneously, as genuine feeling wells up from a heart filled with lively emotions. Would that we had an edition of the Psalms, in which David was treated merely as Horace is ! in which, without casuistick subtleties, the poet should be shown as a poet, his beauty not indeed, cried into our ears, but at the same time not defaced by the patchwork of languages and versification foreign to its nature. In higher criticism upon the poetry of the Hebrews we are still but children. We either stifle ourselves with various readings, or embellish the simplicity of the original with the modish attire of modern languages.

I will now go through the Book of Psalms, in order to mark some of the chief varieties of their lyrical style. To do it fully would not accord with my present plan, and no one will expect me in a few brief sketches, to exhaust the variety to be found in this collection of one hundred and fifty songs.

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It is customary to divide the Psalms into the elevated, the middle, and those of a lower tone, and this is very well, if the division taught any thing definite. Any matter of any considerable extent can be divided in this way ; but the question, always remains to be settled, where each particular piece belongs. Now, let one arrange them, as he will, with reference to this division, and he will be at a loss in many cases, where to place them. The successive steps of lyrical elevation are so numerous, and the tones so near together, or rather so flow into each other, that it would be difficult to apply such a principle of arrangement to the whole number of Psalms, and after

all of what use is the whole system. Let us, then, endeavour to attain the object in a different way.

1. Some Psalms are short. They unfold only a single image in a simple and uniform tone of feeling, and terminate with a beautiful completeness in the expression. I might call them *odes*, expressive of *a single thought*, εἰς ἓν, if the last word did not imply something foreign. Of this sort is the beautiful 133d Psalm, which breathes a fragrance delicate as a rose,

### BROTHERLY UNION.

Behold, how lovely and how pleasant,  
When brothers dwell in peace together !  
Thus breathed its fragrance round  
The precious ointment on the head,  
That ran adown the beard of Aaron,  
And reached the border of his garment.  
So descends the dew of Hermon,  
Refreshing Zion's mountains,\*  
For there Jehovah gave command,  
That blessings dwell forevermore.

The union of brothers, of tribes, and families is here compared with objects of highest sacredness and beauty, and which diffuse an animating fragrance. So the good name of families dwelling in unison is diffused, and gives them dignity and honour. So the dew of Hermon descends to water the parched mountains of Zion, and make them productive of blessings.—As a national song for their festivals, it has a perfect and beautiful close. From the flowing ointment he comes to the

\* The conception here is not *flowing down*, which could not be from Hermon upon Zion but falling, as dew or rain. From the woody Libanus and Hermon, and from the sea, ascended the vapours, which came down upon the parched mountains of Judæa. It seems to have been a requisite in the songs sung at national festivals, that Jerusalem or Zion should be mentioned. Hence the figure here. There seems to be no necessity for altering the text,

descending dew, and from this to the invocation of blessings upon Zion—the true compass of an ode. Aaron's name itself presents a fine example of a peaceful brother, whom his own brother anointed with the blessing of God and the glory of Israel.

### A SHEPHERD'S SONG.

#### THE 23D PSALM.

Jehovah is my shepherd,  
I shall not want.  
He maketh me lie down  
Upon the green pastures,  
He leadeth me  
Beside the still waters,  
Restoring my life.

He leadeth me in a straight path,  
Still faithful to his name.

And though I walk  
Through death's dark valley,  
I fear no evil,  
For thou art with me,  
Thy trusty shepherd's staff  
Is comfort and support.  
Here, spread before my eyes,  
Thou hast prepared my table,  
In presence of my foes,  
My head thou dost anoint,  
My cup is running over.

Yea, goodness and mercy follow me  
Through all the days of my life.  
I shall return to the house of God,  
As long as I live,

From the close it is plain, that this beautiful Psalm was composed in exile. The commencement is a quiet pastoral, but his feelings lead him to drop the image of his sheep, and a table, a royal feast, is spread before the eyes of his oppressors. This joyful hope rises to a full conviction, that success will attend him, as long as he lives. The sudden transition

from one image to another, is in the spirit of the Oriental ode. Yet but one feeling pervades the whole.

Those who would examine more specimens of this sort may read the 15th, 29th, 61st, 67th, 87th, 101st, 150th, and other Psalms. I could wish that I were able to translate all these, so much am I delighted by their simple beauty.

2. So soon as a lyrical effusion, either from the comprehensiveness of its subject, or the fuller expression of emotion, becomes extended, it requires variety, contrasts, a manifoldness of parts, which in the former kind we perceive only in the bud, in a trifling variation of the image. Here, according to the Oriental style, a great effect is produced by change of person, questions and answers, sudden appeals to inanimate or absent objects, and, if in the form thus enlarged a sort of *lyrical representation* and *action* can be introduced, the ode attains its highest perfection. It has, in this way, a beginning, middle and end, the last returning again to the first, and the whole forming thus, a lyrical garland. This is what the critics call the beautiful irregularity, the *ambitus*, of the Ode, *the flight*, in which it *strays*, but is never *lost*. The whole presents itself before us, a picture full of living action. No word can be taken away, no strophe change its place. The beginning and the end are necessary to the middle, and the middle remains impressed upon the memory. Perfect odes of this sort, are few in number in all languages, because there are few subjects, that admit of being treated in this way, but where they are found they should be kept in perpetual remembrance. To the class of songs composed of several members I reckon among the Psalms, the 8th, 20th, 21st, 48th, 50th, 76th, 96th—99th, 111th—113th, 120th—129th. Among the perfect specimens, which have not only variety and contrast, but a progressive lyric action, I venture to name the 2d, 24th, 45th—47th, 80th, 110th, 114th and 127th Psalms. Some include here, also, the 29th and 68th, because, in the voice of God in the former, and the carrying of the ark in the

latter, they suppose a local progress of the representation ; but for this I see no ground. The principle of progression must be inward, from the one living fountain of excited emotion, and cannot come from outward geographical relations. But few of all these can be introduced here, and the choice is difficult.

## THE ENTRANCE OF GOD UPON MOUNT ZION.

### THE 24TH PSALM.

- ALL**        Jehovah's is the earth and its fulness,  
               The world and they that dwell therein,  
               For he hath founded it upon the seas,  
               He hath established it upon the floods.
1.        Who shall ascend the mountain of Jehovah ?  
               Who dare to stand in his most holy place ?
2.        He that hath clean hands, and pure heart,  
               That hath not bound his soul with perfidy,  
               Nor ever sworn deceitfully.  
               He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah,  
               The approbation of his guardian God.\*
1.        This is the people, that seek after him,  
               That seek thy face, O God of Jacob.
- CHORUS.**    Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
               And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,  
               For the king of glory will come in.
1.        Who is the king of glory ?  
               Jehovah strong and mighty,
2.        Jehovah mighty in battle.
- CHORUS.**    Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
               And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,  
               For the king of glory will come in.
1.        Who is the king of glory ?
- CHORUS.**    Jehovah, God of Gods ! he is the king of glory.

\* Political crimes were very properly named here, since he must be free from these, who would approach his national God. The blessing, which he was to receive, is in like manner of a civil nature. The word means properly justification, i. e. in a civil or political sense, and because this involved the keeping of the law of God, and was enjoyed by such as had access to him, it became in the Psalms synonymous with happiness, grace.

The change of voices in this Psalm is obvious to every ear, and it is equally plain that there is a progressive transition of thought, in its economy full of life and action. It commences magnificently with the sentiment, "the earth is Jehovah's." He is to dwell here upon the hill of Zion, and the whole earth will be spread out before him. The transition from the sentiment in the beginning to this little mountain is very beautiful. It becomes a holy mountain, because Jehovah dwells upon it, and that both in a moral and a civil sense; for as nothing impure in sacrifices could be brought before God, so no impure worshipper could appear before him. It seems appropriate too, that only such vices are mentioned here, as are injurious to the general welfare; for Jehovah dwelt here as their national God, as the founder and protector of the Jewish State.\* The remainder of the Psalm is full of action. A multitude presents itself, knocking at the gates, and eager to behold the face of the monarch; and lo! it is Jehovah himself, the ark of the covenant, over which dwelt their ancient God, the leader of their armies. He, who in ancient times had gained so many victories, a glorious king, renowned in war, and shown to be mighty in power, was proclaimed by the answering chorus, and as such he was to dwell by the residence of the heroic king, upon mount Zion, his recent conquest. The ancient doors of his tabernacle must therefore raise their heads, that such a monarch might come in! How picturesque and striking the representation! God entered into a small tent, and would have no temple built for him by David, so that its ancient narrow doors have no magnificence, but what is derived from him, who enters within them. In order to give roundness and dignity to the piece the particular incidents attending the procession, and historically described

\*This portion of the Psalm, as its connexion with the remainder was only casual, and they could not always be sung together, became a national song by itself, (Ps. xv.) as it well deserved to be.



in the 68th Psalm, are here passed over. By comparing them any one may understand the difference between two songs, the one of which is a picture full of living action, and the other history lyrically narrated. Let us now take up a Psalm of the same sort, but breathing a milder spirit; the most beautiful epithalamium of so early times.

### THE ROYAL BRIDE.

A SONG OF LOVE.\*

My heart is uttering words of gratulation,  
My work is consecrated to the king.  
My tongue is like a ready writer's pen.

Lo, thou art fairer than the sons of men,  
And grace is poured upon thy lips,  
Therefore, God hath blessed thee forever.

Gird on thy sword upon thy thigh,  
Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty,  
And in thy majesty go forth victorious,  
Because of truth and the oppressed's right.

And fearful deeds shall thy right hand perform,  
The arrows of thy quiver—(even now  
I see the nations falling at thy feet)—

They pierce, O king, the hearts of thine enemies,

Thy throne, Lord, is forever and ever,  
The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.  
Thou lovest righteousness, and hates iniquity,  
Therefore hath God, thy God, anointed thee  
With oil of joy above thy brethren,

Thy garments are all fragrant  
With myrrh and aloes, and cassia.

From Armenia's ivory palaces,  
Kings' daughters make thee joyful  
In thy magnificence.

But at thy side,  
Thy queen is standing, clothed in gold of Ophir.

Hearken, O daughter, look, incline thine ear,  
Forget thy people, and thy father's house,

\* Ps. xlv.

So shall the king desire thy beauty,  
For he is now thy lord, incline to him.

The daughters, too, of Tyre with presents  
Shall come to thee; the rich among the people  
Shall seek thy favour.

The king's bride  
Is beautiful exceedingly—and she herself  
More beautiful, than her attire of gold.

And now shall she be brought unto the king,  
Adorned with garments of needle work.  
The virgins, her companions, follow her,  
They shall be brought to thee,  
With joy and jubilee shall they be brought,  
And enter now the palace of the king.

In thy fathers' stead, O queen, shall be thy sons,  
And thou shalt make them princes in the land.

But I will spread thy praise from age to age,  
And thus the nations sing of thee, forever and ever.

I have not felt at liberty, in translating this, to destroy the delightful simplicity of its age by modern embellishment. On this simplicity, and its relation to Oriental customs, depends the progress and the whole representative action of the ode. It begins with an annunciation of the subject, and a sort of dedication to the king. It then, first, clothes the bridegroom in all the ornaments of beauty, grace, heroick and regal costume, and makes him worthy of reverence and love, before it places his bride beside him. The ode is from the age of Solomon. This is shown by the description of the magnificent palace, by the daughters of foreign kings, but especially by the representation of the king himself, on whom are heaped all the blessings, which God had promised to the lineage of David. As a hero and king he is represented with arms, his golden sceptre in his hand, the rich anointing oil upon his head, and his garments breathing precious odours. All these representations are derived, partly from the history of Solomon, who was preferred to the throne before his brothers, and partly from the benediction pronounced upon him, that his king-

dom should be a peaceful and perpetual reign of righteousness, in which oppression should cease, and the rights of the oppressed be vindicated. A transition is then made to the bride. Kings' daughters minister to his happiness in his palace, but one is the special object of his love and admiration. As bride and consort she stands beside him clothed in purest gold. The song, then, with childlike simplicity addresses itself to the modest and timid bride, admonishing her to look from her veil and observe him; to forget now her own country, and devote herself to her king, who would then love her in return, and be attracted by her beauty. All this is in accordance with Oriental customs, where the bride was little more than a child, and the superiour power and influence of the husband over her was very great. Soon, however, she shall enjoy the prerogatives of her station, the daughters of Tyre, the mart of all costly and precious things, shall wait upon her with bridal presents, and rich princes shall sue to her for her friendship and intercession. In language still more personal and flattering it is then added, that she is beautiful, not only in her outward embellishments, but that her own hidden person constitutes her loveliness, and excels in beauty all the precious stones of her attire. In like manner she is brought richly adorned to the palace; the procession moves with songs and rejoicing out of the view of the poet, and he only adds his wish modestly intimated, that she may enjoy the blessings of a happy marriage. The song closes in a lofty tone, as it had begun in a style of refinement, and exhibits throughout discernment, loftiness of conception, and gracefulness of style.

We proceed now to other Psalms, which have not indeed, so wide a compass in the action, which they develope, but yet form a beautiful whole, composed of several distinct members.

**DELIVERANCE FROM DANGER****A NATIONAL SONG.\***

Had not Jehovah been with us,  
 (May Israel now say)  
 Had not Jehovah been with us,  
 When men rose up against us,  
 Then had they swallowed us up,  
 In their fierce wrath against us.  
 Then had the waters overwhelmed us,  
 The waves had gone over our souls,  
 The swelling flood passed over our life.  
 Blessed be God! He gave us not  
 To become a prey to their teeth.  
 Our souls have escaped,  
 As a bird from the snare of the fowler,  
 The snare is broken and we are escaped.  
 Our help is in the name of Jehovah,  
 Who created the heavens and the earth.

The 129th Psalm is obviously formed upon the same lyrical model.

**DELIVERANCE FROM DANGER.****A NATIONAL SONG.**

Often have they oppressed me from my youth,  
 (May Israel now say,)  
 Often have they oppressed me from my youth,  
 Yet have they not prevailed against me.  
 The plowers plowed upon my back,  
 They made their furrows long.  
 The righteous God hath cut the cords of the wicked,  
 The foes of Zion shall return confounded.  
 As grass upon the housetops must they be,  
 That before it is ripened withereth away,  
 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand,  
 Nor the binder of sheaves his arm,  
 Where none that pass by say,  
 "The blessing of God be on you,  
 We bless you in the name of Jehovah."

\* Ps. cxxiv.

Similar to these is the beautiful song respecting the return from captivity, in which the first deliverance by Moses which they anticipated, and made use of to enkindle their hopes, and strengthen their confidence, is compared with the second.

### DELIVERANCE FROM CAPTIVITY.

A NATIONAL SONG. PS. 126.

When God turned back the captives of Zion,\*  
We were like them that dream.  
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,  
Our tongue with songs of joy.†  
Then said they among the nations,  
The Lord hath done great things for them.‡  
The Lord hath done great things for us,  
Whereof we are glad!

Turn then again our captivity, O Lord  
As thou turnedst the streams in the South.§  
The sower soweth in tears,  
And reapeth with songs of joy,  
He goeth weeping, and beareth his seed,  
He cometh with singing, and bringeth his sheaves.

Can a nation be called barbarous, that has even a few such national songs? and how many of them do we find among the Hebrews? I cannot deny myself the pleasure of closing this class of the Psalms with an elegy, that belongs indeed to a late age, but is not on that account less beautiful.

\* From Egypt. [This reference of it to Egypt is not a very probable one, and the deliverance by Moses could scarcely be called with propriety a *return to Zion*. The Psalm refers properly only to the Babylonish exile. The poet means to say, we could scarcely conceive the unexpected joy of deliverance from Babylon, we thought it a dream. &c. These remarks apply also to other notes of the author on this psalm. J.]

† Ex. 15.

‡ Ex. xv. 14. These words acquire a clear, beautiful import, when understood of the first deliverance, and this reference of the ode gives its chief beauty as a whole.

§ That is in the Red Sea. Ex. 14.

## THE CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON.

THE 137TH PSALM.

By the rivers of Babylon we sat down,  
And wept, when we remembered Zion.  
We hanged our harps upon their willows.

For they, that held us in captivity,  
Required of us a song,  
Our oppressors required of us mirth.  
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

How shall we sing Jehovah's song  
In a foreign land !

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem !  
Let my right hand forget me,  
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.  
If I do not remember thee,  
If I prefer not Jerusalem  
Above my highest joy.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom.  
In the day of Jerusalem's affliction,  
When they cried, "raze it,  
Raze it, even to its foundation."

Daughter of Babylon, the desolate,\*  
Blessed be he, that requiteth thee,  
That requiteth thee, as thou hast done to us.  
Happy shall he be that seizeth thy little ones,  
And casteth them upon the rocks.

I do not join in the imprecation of the last lines ; but if the song was written during, or immediately after, the Babylonish captivity, its accents must be felt, as touching and natural—and his beloved country is in the view of the poet sacred above every other object.

3. Every emotion has its perfect sphere, in which its action may be contemplated as a whole. The sorrow, which exalts itself to joy, the anxiety, which exhausts itself, and sinks to rest, the calm tranquility, which changes into a joyful confidence, the contemplative mood, that at length loses itself in

*x. 26. in ista nota?*

an ecstasy, and the rapture, which sinks again into calm contemplation—every effection has its own determinate course, and gives consequently, a corresponding ambitus to the lyric expression of it, in which we feel its completeness. I must go through nearly all the remaining Psalms, if I would arrange them according to these principles, for all are animated with feeling. I give here only a few examples.

Psalms, in which the feelings are elevated from a tone of lamentation to hope and confidence. 6th, 22d, 60th, 62d, 85th, 145th, and many others.

Psalms, in which an ardent and heroick spirit is raised, till it sinks again to repose in the remembrance of God. 7th, 10th, 13th, 17th, 26th, 35th, 36th, 52d—59th, 61st, 64th, 69th—71st, 86th, 88th, 94th, 109th, 140th—142d. These, too, are very numerous.

Psalms, in which a tranquil confidence is expressed throughout. 3d—5th, 11th, 17th, 21st, 25th, 27th, 28th, 30th, 37th, 41st, 44th, 63d, 65th, 131st, 132d, &c.

Others are triumphal songs merely, and of these, besides the sublime odes already introduced, I will name only the 9th, 18th, 33d, 34th, 66th, 116th—118th, 138th.—It would be too tedious to go through with specimens of all these several kinds. Let the teacher point them out to his hearers, and those most uniform in their tone, when psychologically considered, will be found beautiful. Of these referred to, I can give here but a single specimen.

## SORROW AND HOPE.

### THE 6TH PSALM.

O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath,  
Nor chasten me in thy fierce anger.  
Be merciful to me, O Jehovah ! for I am weak.  
Heal me, O Jehovah, for my bones tremble ;  
My whole soul is in terrors.  
And thou, Jehovah ! O how long !

Return, O Jehovah, deliver my soul.  
 O save me for thy mercies' sake.  
 For in death there is no remembrance of thee,  
 In the grave, who shall give thee thanks ?  
 I am wearied with my groaning,  
 All night my bed is wet with tears.  
 With tears I make my couch to swim,  
 Mine eye is consumed with sorrow,  
 It looks but feebly upon all mine enemies.  
 Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity !  
 For God hath heard the voice of my weeping.  
 Jehovah hath heard my supplication,  
 Jehovah hath accepted my prayer.  
 Ashamed, confounded, shall be my enemies,  
 They shall fall back, and be ashamed suddenly.

Unsuitable as this may be for a general prayer of penitence, its tone and current of feeling is still strikingly beautiful, considered in relation to David as an individual. The languishing, and now aged, and feeble king, who feels his misfortunes as the chastisement of God, indulges in grief, till he sinks to the brink of the grave, but, when the word "enemies" is uttered from his lips, his emotions change, his courage and hope return. As most of the Psalms are an artless representation of particular situations, much still remains to be learned from them of the natural movement of lyrical emotion and expression.

4. In many of the Psalms, which contain moral sentiments, a beautiful system of instruction prevails. Of these, the 14th, 19th, 32d, 39th, 49th, 91st, 103d, 115th, 139th, and the didactic Psalms of Asaph generally may be named, as particularly worthy of attention. In the 19th Psalm, some have attempted to point out a twofold subject, but I do not discover it. From the great and general household of God in nature, where every object praises him and obeys his commands, the poet comes to the more intimate relation of God to his people, which he represents as more secure and affectionate, in the



same degree as it is more limited and confiding. The movement of the ode, therefore, is antithetic. The first image presented is raised to its greatest dignity, when it is interrupted, and the tone of the language becomes more and more gentle and confiding, till it expresses the near friendship of God, and his communion with the individual, human soul. The most secret and hidden faults of his friend are noticed by God, and he causes the silent suggestions of the heart to be received, as the discourse of a friend. Such is the beautiful economy of the Psalm,\* and the delightful instruction, which it contains. In didactick pieces of this sort generally, however, we are not to expect the same progressive action, as in the triumphal and warlike songs. Instruction loves a smooth area, and goes directly to its purpose. Finally, in the alphabetical Psalms we must look for no artificial structure in the logical connexion. They are a blooming cluster of choice sentences, and arranged with a view to the memory, and the facility of learning them. The long 119th Psalm treats for the most part, of only one leading sentiment, and is a collection of moral truths expressed with many variations. I must not here give many examples, since some have already been introduced, and most of them are familiar to the recollection even of children. It is, too, the most beautiful test of the didactick, that it is instructive to children.

### A LYRICAL DIALOGUE ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE

#### THE 91ST PSALM.

1. He that dwelleth under the care of the most High,  
And abideth under the shadow of the Almighty,  
He saith to Jehovah, "Thou art my refuge,"  
My fortress, and my God, in thee will I trust."
2. He will deliver thee from the snares of death,

\* A ground of many misinterpretations of the Psalms, is the taking law, word, judgment, testimony in the modern, and not in the ancient political sense, which these words [conveyed to the minds of the Jews. To these refer, also, the duties and benefits, which the Psalms celebrate.

He will save thee from the deadly pestilence.  
 He covereth thee with his feathers,  
 And under his wings dost thou trust,  
 His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

A thousand shall fall at thy side,  
 Ten thousand at thy right hand,  
 But it shall not come nigh thee.  
 With thine eyes shalt thou behold,  
 And see the reward of the wicked.

1. "In thee, O Jehovah! is my refuge."
2. So shalt thou dwell securely and on high."  
 There shall no evil befall thee,  
 Nor any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

He giveth his servants charge for thee,  
 To keep thee in all thy ways.  
 They shall bear thee on their wings,  
 Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder,  
 And trample upon the young lion and the dragon.

"Because he trusted in me, I deliver him,

"I exalt him because he honoureth my name.

"When he calleth upon me, I will answer,

"When in trouble, I will be with him,

"I will deliver him, and honour him,

"With long life will I satisfy him,

"And will show him my salvation."

Can the providence of God be taught with a sense of more cordial trust, or with more tenderness of feeling? There is here no chorus, indeed, but the change of speakers produces the finest effect. It makes the whole a fatherly lesson, progressing and rising higher to the end, where the Supreme Father speaks and confirms his truth.

But enough of examples. In order to feel the beauty even of the finest Psalms, we must transport ourselves into the age, in which they were written, and return to its simplicity of feeling. As most of the Psalms are prayers, so that childlike submission of the heart is necessary to the proper use of them, which the Orientals require in their religious ceremo-

nies and prayers, that silent admiration of God and his works, which sometimes rises into rapture, and sometimes sinks the mind to the deepest abasement. The song hurries from thought to thought, as from mountain to mountain. It touches the springs of emotion rapidly but deeply, and is fond of repeating the impression. It paints its objects only by rapid sketches. All lyric poetry, in which pastoral innocence and rural sentiments prevail, requires a calm and quiet mind; its beauties can produce no effect upon a sophisticated and scoffing one. As the heaven pictures itself only in the clear calm sea, so we see the gentle wave of emotion describe its circles only in the tranquil soul.

Here it would be unjustifiable to withhold in silence the name of the man, who first made us in Germany familiar with the genuine tones of the Hebrew Psalms. The most simple of the odes of Klopstock especially in detached parts, are tones from the harp of David. Many of his lyric pieces, and the most artless songs of his Messiah, have given to our language a simplicity and truth of lyric expression, which we should seek in vain from the most successful in this department of the neighbouring nations.

## X.

### CHARACTERS OF THE AUTHORS OF THE PSALMS.

- I. Of the character of David. The delicacy and sensibility of his mind in sorrow and joy. His confidence in God, and whence it originated. What class of readers consequently will be particularly fond of his Psalms. The straight forwardness and cordial sincerity, which characterise them. David's praise of Abner at his grave. His warm feelings excited by the persecution of his enemies. Passages in the Psalms relative to Divine retribution and justice. A peculiarity of David in promising songs to God, as the best offering, which he could bring. Of the passages, in which he speaks of the law of God, as the political constitution of the country. How we are to apply the characteristic sentiment of these Psalms.
- II. Of the character of Asaph. A theodicee respecting the fortune of the wicked. Prize songs on this subject by David and the sons of Korah.
- III. Songs of the sons of Korah. Earnest longing after Jerusalem, an affecting elegy.
- IV. Songs of anonymous authors. What the ascending songs or songs of degrees probably were. Examples and proofs from what is contained in them. General view of the whole book of Psalms.
- V. Of the musick of the Hebrews. Their various instruments of musick. Influence of the instrument upon the various songs. What is meant by the word *Selah*.

We have hitherto only surveyed the Psalms as it were externally, let us now look more nearly into the character of their authors.

#### I. CHARACTER OF DAVID AS A PSALMIST.

The leading trait of his character is truth. His songs are a faithful picture of his life, his feelings, and his age. Hence Luther called them, in his preface to the Psalms, a garden,

And David said to Joab,  
 And to all the people with him,  
 " Rend your garments,  
 And gird you with sackcloth,  
 And mourn for Abner."  
 And the king himself followed the bier,  
 And when they buried Abner,  
 He lifted up his voice,  
 And wept at Abner's grave,  
 And all the people with him.  
 The king lamented over Abner,  
 And said,  
 " Abner died not as a coward dieth!  
 Thy hands were not bound,  
 Nor thy feet put in fetters.  
 As one falleth before wicked men,  
 So fellest thou."  
 And all the people wept aloud.

The reign of the peaceful Solomon was in many respects far more severe and despotick, than that of the warlike and conquering David.

4. As a necessary consequence, therefore, since he was innocent and human, the persecution of his enemies was the more trying to his patience. The feelings, which it awakened, corroded his heart with anguish, and find an expression, even where it should not be the case, in general Psalms of praise or thanksgiving. Every one knows, how early misfortunes give a colouring to the objects, with which the feelings of the soul are connected. Early mischances, faithless friends, undeserved neglect at length render the heart cheerless, even if they do not embitter it. Most of David's Psalms, to which these remarks apply were composed in affliction, when his heart sought consolation in his harp, and we all know how freely the soul expresses itself under the first lively sense of unjust suffering. Though, therefore, I could wish for myself, and with reference to their present use, that the reference to his enemies were removed from some of his Psalms, as the

8th, 19th, 23d, 104th, and 139th, yet they belong properly to the picture of David's feelings, and mode of thought. He must have given an untrue expression of his soul, if he had not placed it before God in this, as in its other traits. Yet he does not by these expressions lay us under any obligation to adopt his imprecations at unfit times or without occasion. It must be admitted, that his imprecations upon his enemies, are not always in the spirit of the Christian religion. | ?

These same trying circumstances gave David occasion to unfold the characters of the *retribution*, and *righteous judgment of God* as the feeling of his heart prompted him, and more fully than had been done in earlier times. In the conception of Moses, God was a national God, who exercised retributive justice over the whole nation in their general fortunes. David and his cotemporaries unfold still finer traits of the Divine government over individual men and over the world. Asaph does it as a teacher; David as an experienced hero; and many of their expressions are now, after the lapse of three thousand years, the most suitable for giving a moral view of God in his relation to the succession of events. In many of the Psalms it might appear, as if Job had been their model; but every thing throughout flows from its own proper and natural occasion.

5. It is a remarkable circumstance in regard to David, that he so often *promises his songs* as offerings to God, and considers them, instead of sacrifices and burnt offerings, of the greatest worth, and as vows of the sanctuary, best pleasing to God. These were the "calves of his lips," of which the Prophets, also speak, and may be explained from the character of David, and the age in which he lived. In our lips the words are often misapplied. With David the most appropriate and best offering, which he could make to God was his songs of praise. They were the flower of his strength and pertained to his highest glory. To offer bullocks from the stall would be far easier for a king, but he disdained to pre-

sent these cheaper offerings, and chose to honour God with the finest effusions of his poetical powers. But to whom among us will these passages of the Psalms be appropriated? Calves, bullocks, we should not offer to God, new and original songs we cannot offer, as David did; and from whom, moreover, does God require such poetical expressions of penitence? Thus these words are for us lifeless and unmeaning.

6. David reigned in a state, where the government was properly a theocracy, in which he stood in the place of God, and was under the necessity of governing himself in accordance with its ancient economy, the established constitution of the country. This gives to his songs throughout a spiritual character, even where he speaks of mere secular laws and regulations. He sat as a prince or viceroy of God upon Mount Zion; in righteousness and judgment his priest, in victory his instrument, in the observance of the national laws his servant, no less than the lowest of his people. When, therefore, all the deeds and triumphs of David are ascribed to God, when the king rejoices in his God, boasts of his power, and swears new fidelity to his laws, all these expressions pertain, in fact, to the peculiar national language and relations. When he celebrates the wonders, i. e. the appropriate beauty and excellence of the Mosaic laws, and so often binds himself to rule in accordance with them, he was in so doing no indolent youth kneeling at his harp, as he is sometimes represented. Even in those Psalms, in which he speaks of his love to the law of God, he speaks also of his diligence in business, of his watchfulness of his own heart, that he might not become arbitrary and unbridled, in short, of his reverence for the laws and usages of his country. That he was bound to do so he felt very distinctly, but most deeply, when he had transgressed, and the chastisements of God were upon him. "I have sinned against Jehovah, my nation's God, but what have these sheep done?"

These few traits may serve to show, with what a free and

liberal spirit the Psalms of David must be used, if they are to be for us what they were for their author. Here, too, the rule of Young may be applied, that we often approach most nearly to the ancients, when we seem to be farthest removed from them. The flowers of general instruction and ornament may pass into our mind, and all the delicacies of language and style may also, become ours, if our hearts sympathize with the emotions, which they express. But all blind imitation is here, too, but a worshipping of Baal, and such expressions as *calves* of the lips are but unmeaning words.—Only then, do individual Psalms become favourites, when we find them, in particular situations of life, beautiful, elevated, and true, as the proper language of our own hearts, and learn to love the ancient harp of David, as anticipating or echoing the tones of sentiment in our own souls.

## II. CHARACTER OF ASAPH AS A PSALMIST.

In didactick Psalms Asaph excels David. His soul was less tender, but more calm and free from passion. The best of his Psalms are formed on a beautiful plan, and his national songs, also, are peculiarly excellent. In short, he merited the name of a Prophet, i. e. of one divinely inspired upon the harp. A single specimen of his didactick poetry must suffice.

### A VINDICATION OF GOD IN REGARD TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE WICKED.

#### THE 73d PSALM.

Yet, surely God is good to the upright,\*  
 To such as cleave to him with pure heart.  
 My feet indeed were almost gone,  
 My steps were already slipping,  
 For I was envious at the foolish,  
 And jealous of the prosperity of the wicked.

\* In many passages the word Israel is taken in a constructio pregnans and the notion of uprightness, contained in it is to be interpreted by itself.



No snare of death is spread for them,\*  
 But they are strong and firm.  
 They know not the troubles of life,  
 The scourge of misfortune reacheth them not,  
 Like other men.

Therefore their pride adorneth them with chains,  
 Their violence decketh them with rich attire,†  
 Their eyes look out from amidst fatness, †  
 Their devices flow forth from their hearts.

They scoff, they speak evil of a friend,||  
 They speak with arrogance.  
 They place their mouth, as Gods in the heavens,  
 And their tongue must be obeyed on earth.§

They satisfy their thirst from solid rocks,¶  
 They press from them abundant water,  
 And say, how ? doth God know this ?  
 Hath the Most High knowledge of us ?

These are the thoughts of the ungodly,

\* Death is here represented as a hunter, lurking about the paths of mortals. The persons spoken of here, have made a covenant with him, and a league with the grave, so that he spreads no nets for them.

† It is not said merely they are rich and proud, but oppression has given them the wealth of others.

‡ If any choose to read the text here with the LXX. I have no objection, but the other reading, also, gives an opposite image. Their eye looks forth proudly, and its visions must be accomplished, so too, the devices of their hearts.

|| See the other Psalms of Asaph. l. 20.

§ Heavens and earth are here contrasted. They raise their heads even to the heavens, and their word goes forth over the earth, and is every where obeyed. Compare Ps. clxxviii. 15.

¶ Every one knows, that the two members of the common translations do not correspond. The second is clear, the fault must, therefore, be in the first. I divide the words differently, and there is not only sense and parallelism, but we see a paronomasia with the following words. It is an image of the severest oppression, and happily introduces what follows. The Masoretic text, also, indicates a defect here.

And these are they, that prosper in the world,\*  
And that increase in riches.

In vain, therefore, have I kept pure my heart,  
And washed my hands in innocence,  
For every day have I been scourged,  
And every morning chastened with affliction.†

I said, I will declare, how it is with it.  
“Lo! they are the generation of thy children.”  
My word was false!—

I thought to understand it  
But was in painful doubt,

Until I went into the councils of God,  
And then I understood their end.

On slippery places hast thou set them,  
And into deep abysses are they falling.

How are they desolate in a moment,  
And utterly consumed with terrors !‡

As a dream when one awaketh,  
So, O Lord, hast thou awaked,||  
And put to flight their empty image.

How was my heart distressed,  
My veins pierced through with pain,  
That I, so foolish, knew it not,  
But was in judgment as a brute before thee.§

Now I cleave continually to thee.  
For thou didst hold me by my right hand.  
Guide me always, even as thou wilt,

\* The persons spoken of are those who live in abundance, the beati, fortunate men.

† Fortune changes every morning, brings every day some new calamity

‡ The words of the original present a very vivid image.

|| That the word means *in awaking*, not *in the city* appears from the context.

§ The sequel shows clearly enough, what is meant here. He was at first in respect to the purpose of God, as a brute, i. e. he understood nothing of his purpose, judged irrationally, and was disposed to break away from him and violate his faith. (See Ps. xxxii. 8.) Now he judges differently of God, and cleaves to him as the following verse represents it with a repetition of the word.

And then receive me with honour.

For whom have I in heaven but thee,  
And whom on earth do I desire beside thee?  
My flesh and heart are wasted away,  
But thou art the strength of my heart,  
Thou art my portion, O God, forever.

They that are far from thee shall perish.  
Thou destroyest all, that fall away from thee,  
But good for me is drawing near to God.  
In God Jehovah have I put my trust,  
Still will I sing of all thy works.

How beautiful are the sentiments of this Psalm! It begins with a brief moral sentiment,\* the result of many reflections, with which it also closes. Soon and imperceptibly he comes to his situation of trial,† describes how he fell into error, and, when he has placed this picture in the clearest light, makes another transition.‡ He is brought into the counsels of Divine providence, and sees that in his former opinion he was brutish. New vows of fidelity to God (having reference to his former wavering) are uttered with the greatest fervour,|| till a general moral sentiment again closes the Psalm.§ Both in its sentiments and its arrangement it is a beautiful didactick Psalm.

We must not extend his views beyond their proper bounds. Asaph saw the prosperity of the wicked, and saw it vanish away, while the happiness of the upright is true and abiding—this is the extent of his view. Neither future retribution of the former, nor an exposition of the eternal blessings of the latter, was the purpose of his ode.

If I mistake not, there is in several Psalms a noble competition in the treatment of the subject presented in the above. We have already contemplated one Psalm containing similar views.¶ It treated the subject as a dark enigma, in a lyrick

\* V. 1.

† V. 2. 3.

‡ V. 12—16.

|| V. 23—26.

§ V. 27—28.

¶ Vol. I. p. 180.

and beautiful style, like all the Psalms of the sons of Korah. Here is the rival song of David on the same theme.

## THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED.

### THE 39TH PSALM.

I said, I will be watchful all my life,  
That I may guard my tongue from sin.  
I will restrain my mouth in silence,  
While wicked men are present with me.  
I kept silence, and ceased also from joy,\*  
My sorrow was excited in me,  
My heart was glowing in my bosom,  
While I was musing the fire burned,  
And—then I spake with my tongue.

Jehovah, make me know mine end,  
How short my life is,  
That I may know how frail I am.  
Behold, my life is but a hand-breadth,  
And all my time as nothing before thee.  
The life of man is but an empty shadow,  
That thinks itself enduring.†

Yea, man goeth forth a shadowy image,  
Yea, he disquieteth himself in vain,  
He gathereth and knoweth not for whom.

On what then do I place my hope ?  
In thee, O Lord, is all my hope,  
Deliver me from my transgressions,  
And make me not the sport of fools.  
So will I keep silence, and open not my mouth,  
For thou wilt do all things well.‡

Remove thy stroke away from me,  
I faint from the blow of thine hand.  
For when thou dost rebuke severely  
Even the strong man for his iniquity,

\* How refined and yet how true ! We cannot repress and break off our anxious thoughts by concealing them. They must find vent ; they must be freely unfolded, or they corrode the heart still more bitterly.

† The expression in the original is concise and beautiful.

‡ Thou wilt accomplish it better than I can prescribe.

His beauty is consumed as by the moth,  
 Yea, man is altogether vanity.  
 Hear then my prayer, Jehovah,  
 Give ear unto my supplication.  
 Be not silent, when I weep before thee.  
 I am here a stranger with thee,  
 A wanderer, as all my fathers were.  
 O spare me, that I may recover strength,  
 Before I go hence, and be no more.

A song of tenderness, composed perhaps during sickness, and wholly in David's style, abounding in fine personal feeling. One, who is fond of this, will prefer the song of David, those, who seek instruction, the psalm of Asaph, and those, who delight in lyrical invention, the ode of the sons of Korah, which, in depicting the fate of the wicked, ventures into the realms of death. David has another instructive psalm (Ps. 37.) on the same subject. There are several similar lyrical competitions in the psalms, especially in the national songs. (Com. Ps. 46 and 76. 80. 85. 44. 78. &c.) To compare them together is a very pleasing task, which illustrates the characters of the writers, as well as their peculiar styles of composition.

### III. SONGS OF THE SONS OF KORAH.

Were these songs written by David? If so, why was not his name attached to them? since to him, as well as to Asaph, other songs are ascribed, which probably belong to later times. Perhaps they may have been from one of Heman's choir—and their author may not unjustly be esteemed the most elevated and truly lyric poet of all in the collection. His national songs are brief, full and animated. The 45th Psalm is one of the most beautiful bridal songs, the 42d one of the finest elegies—The latter is inserted here as an example.

## LONGING AFTER JERUSALEM.

## THE 42. 43. PSALM.

As the hart panteth after fountains of water,  
 So panteth my soul after thee, O God.  
 My soul thirsteth for God, the living God,\*  
 When shall I come, and see the face of God!  
 My tears were long my meat day and night,  
 While day by day they said to me,  
 Where now is God, thy helper.  
 I thought thereon; (and poured forth my tears)  
 As I went with many to the house of God,  
 With joy and praise in a rejoicing throng.

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul,  
 And why art thou disquieted within me?  
 Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him,  
 Him, my deliverer and my God.*

And yet, O God, my soul is grieved,  
 Therefore will I remember thee,  
 Here amidst mountains and streams,  
 By Jordan, and the hills of Libanus.

As there wave rusheth upon wave,  
 They rush upon me like thy billows,  
 For all thy waves and rivers  
 Have gone over me.

And yet the goodness of Jehovah  
 Upholdeth me by day,  
 And in the night his song is with me,  
 Even prayer to my God, the living God.

I sing to God my rock,  
 Wherefore dost thou forget me,  
 Wherefore go I mourning,  
 For the oppression of my enemies?

It pierceth through my bones,  
 When my enemies reproach me,  
 While day by day they say to me,  
 Where now is God, thy helper?

\*The living God is contrasted with lifeless idols. Here too it has a beautiful allusion to the living fountains above.

*Why art thou cast down O my soul,  
And why art thou disquieted within me ?  
Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him,  
Him, my deliverer and my God.*

Judge me, O God, maintain my right,  
Deliver me from a merciless nation,  
From a deceitful and wicked man.

For thou art the God in whom I trust,  
Why dost thou cast me off ?  
Wherefore go I mourning  
For the oppression of my enemies ?

O send out thy light and thy truth,\*  
That they may lead me and guide me,  
That they may bring me to thy holy hill,  
And to thy tabernacle.

Then will I go unto the altar of God,  
To God, who is my joy and rejoicing.  
With the harp will I sing praise to thee,  
O God, my God.

*Why art thou cast down O my soul,  
And why art thou disquieted within me ?  
Hope thou in God for I shall yet praise him,  
Him, my deliverer, and my God.*

I must not analyze this delightful picture, so full of lyric pathos. For those, who do not of themselves feel the beautiful transitions, the gentle movement, and dream as it were of these self quieting meditations, especially the picture of the regions about Libanus and the Jordan, would not be taught to feel them by the fullest exposition. As every one, who seeks for consolation, seizes upon the first object for aid, so the eye of the afflicted mourner here falls upon the rushing billows of the rivers, which flow out from the lake Phiala. They rush with a mournful sound, and bring before his mind an image of the affliction, which Jehovah had poured upon

\* Thy Urim and Thummim. The passage shows, why David referred to them.

his soul ; till he reflects, that his harp still remains faithful, and with it he again, full of confident hope, which already becomes a present reality to his mind, transports himself to the rejoicing choirs at Jerusalem.

#### IV. SONGS OF ANONYMOUS AUTHORS.

We have a considerable number of Psalms with no name attached to them, of which many were probably from later times, but which are not therefore the less valuable. In some of them we discover more refined doctrines than belonged to the age of David, and shall embellish our third part with several of the number. At present I can only say a word of the so called *ascending songs or songs of degrees*.

Some consider the songs of degrees, as marching songs in the return from Babylon, because Ezra 7. 9. calls this return an ascent. The contents of most of them have little to confirm this supposition. Many are at all events from late periods, and the 137th distinctly sings of the captivity in Babylon but very few of them seem to refer directly to the journey toward Jerusalem. Does the word ascent mean nothing else in Hebrew? Was it not the expression commonly used of those who went up to Jerusalem, and especially to the national festivals? Why may we not suppose then these songs of degrees to be only the same sort of travelling festival and national songs, as many others from David, Asaph, and the sons of Korah. Such they plainly are, and with this enlarged view of their character they are for the most part intelligible.

I begin with the 120th Psalm, though unwillingly, as it has very little to show the circumstances, in which it was composed, and is perhaps an entirely personal and individual lamentation.

#### COMPLAINT OF UNFRIENDLY COMPANIONS.

##### THE 120th PSALM.

In my distress I call upon Jehovah,  
I cry unto him, and he heareth me.



**Deliver me, O Jehovah from slanderous lips,  
And free me from a deceitful tongue.**

**What doth it to thee, the deceitful tongue?  
What doth it to thee?**

**It pierceth as sharp arrows of the warrior,  
It burneth like coals of pointed wood.**

**Alas that I dwell in robbers tents,\*  
And dwell as with Arabian savages.**

**Too long have I dwelt with men,  
Who are enemies of peace.**

**I am for peace, but when I speak,  
They are for war.**

The speaker is a sojourner, who complains of the intolerable disposition of his companions. He dwells in tents, and compares those around him to Arabian robbers. He wishes the time, which he is to spend with them, were at an end, and this is all we learn from the text of the Psalm.

Were these tents moving toward Jerusalem? Did they encamp without the city, as they often must do, during the national festival. These questions are more easily asked than answered.

The 121st Psalm explains itself more fully. There is nothing in it of Babylon, but it exhibits a march towards Jerusalem and the holy mountains.

### **A SONG OF GRATULATION IN GOING TOWARD JERUSALEM**

#### **THE 121ST PSALM.**

**I lift my eyes, and look to the hills,  
From which cometh my help.  
My help cometh from Jehovah,**

\* The word means a skin, a rude tent covering, from which a wild race, living in tents perhaps, had their name. The complainer therefore says "it is with him, as if he lived with wild savages" The Israelites were never captives in Meshek' and Kedar, and these places were far asunder. They are used here only figuratively, as the parallelism shows.

**Who made the heavens and the earth.**

**He will not suffer thy foot to slide,  
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.**

**Behold he, that keepeth Israël,  
Will neither slumber nor sleep.**

**Jehovah will be thy keeper,  
Jehovah will be thy shade,  
Who goeth (as a friend) at thy side,  
That the sun smite thee not by day,  
Nor the moon afflict thee by night.**

**The Lord preserve thee from evil,  
The Lord preserve thy soul.**

**The Lord shall guard thy going out,  
And thy coming in now, and forevermore.**

Let us conceive a young Israelite, who like a new fledged bird looks toward the mountains, in which his confidence is placed, who eagerly desires to proceed upon the journey, and to see Jerusalem, and whose aged father bestows these blessings on him as he departs, and so it will be word for word explained. It is no going up from Babylon, for who there should bestow such blessings? It is the voice of a tender farewell, which cannot find a last word, and satisfy itself with the bestowment of blessings. The song might also be sung on the way by individuals or in choirs. They congratulated each other on their journey.

That the 122d Psalm expresses the desires of a young Israelite, who has already been once at Jerusalem, and is now rejoicing at the annunciation of another journey, has been already remarked. The 123d, 125th, 134th plainly show, that they belong also to the same class. The 124th, 129th are songs of thanksgiving for the deliverance of Israel, such as were sung at national festivals, and such as we find among the songs of Asaph, and the sons of Korah.\* The 126th is of the same kind, probably composed during the captivity, and afterwards retained as a national song, as a memorial of confidence and joy. The 133d praises the unity of tribes

and families, the 128th the happiness of domestic life, the 127th the blessing of a numerous family, though their education requires toil and care—all of them the finest subjects for an assembled people. Would that we had many such adapted to our customs and modes of life, as pure, as concise, as full of the spirit of song, as these were for the people of Israel. The 130th is a confession of sin, a preparation for religious sacrifice, when one felt himself oppressed with a sense of guilt. The 132d commends to God the family of the king, Zion, the priests, and was thus destined for the same occasions. Finally these fifteen beautiful songs were followed by songs of praise, which were obviously designed for the temple and the publick festivals.\*

If we look over the book of Psalms in this way, we may easily arrange it for ourselves, especially if we take the Jewish division into five books to aid us. The national psalms stand, for the most part, between the others, not each by itself, but in small collections. Here is a brief view of the arrangement.

Ps. 1. The preface or introduction to the book.

Ps. 2. A royal Psalm, the crown of the book.

Ps. 3—40 Mostly Psalms having personal reference to David. These include the first book according to the Jewish division.

Ps. 41—49. Songs of the sons of Korah, composed on a variety of subjects. Most of them are national songs, and the 50th, the beautiful didactick psalm of Asaph, closes the first collection of Korahite songs.

Ps. 51—64. Songs having personal relation to David.

Ps. 65—68. National psalms, perhaps also those that follow, till the 72d on the reign of Solomon closes the second book.

Ps. 70—83. Songs of the Korahites and other writers, the

\*The book of Psalms was probably composed of distinct smaller collections, and these belonged to one, which had been called the book of travelling songs, the songs of ascent.

greater part of them national. Here closes the third book, which was wholly from poets connected with the temple musick, and probably was at a later period appended to the Psalms of David, which closed with the second book.

Ps. 90. The song of Moses. Ps. 91—107 and to the end of the book psalms of plain and general import; plainly a contribution from the temple, and for the use of the national festivals. The fifth book is the latest, and most miscellaneous collection.

Ps. 108—110 Songs of David, or having reference to him. Ps. 111—118 Psalms for the temple and festivals. The 119 a collection of moral precepts. Ps. 120—134 the songs of degrees, which are closed with songs of praise, and Ps. 138—145 Psalms of David, which are also closed with songs of praise. We see how they all fall into groups, and an editor, who treated the Psalms merely as songs, could by arranging them in this way aid the clearness of our view, and facilitate the memory of them.

## V. OF THE MUSICK OF THE PSALMS

Notwithstanding the elaborate treatises we have on this subject, we obtain few results from them in regard to the poetry and economy of the Psalms. Nothing is so difficult to be transmitted from one age, and the customs of one period and country to another, as language and musick. They float upon the air, and are fleeting as the breeze. The ancient and modern musick, the musick of the East and of the West, are so different from each other, that, even if we knew more of them there would be found but little, which our ears would relish. I remark only briefly.

1. The instruments, which are named in the Psalms, are either ruling, or only accompanying instruments. The accompanying are obviously the common ones, which therefore do not occur in any of the inscriptions. They belong to the

full chorus of joyful exclamation and praise, and to the songs of the temple. Since the people remained only in the outer court, and the music sounded to them from the temple, or under the open sky, the multitude of singers and plain instruments is readily accounted for. To this class belong the castanets, the adufa, many kinds of trumpets and flutes. It was a kind of military musick, because the God of Zion was a Lord of Sabaoth i. e. of warlike hosts, and to this character the sentiments of many psalms have an obvious reference. When it is said, that Asaph struck the castanets, this is not named as his only instrument, but with this he led the choir, he beat the time. In some songs also he prophesied, i. e. employed his inventive power, as a poet with the accompaniment of his musick.

2. The softer musick, accompanying the language of poetry, was formed by single instruments; hence one song is referred to the flute, one to the guitar and harp, another to the horn, &c. It would seem, that the ancients, with whom poetry and musick were intimately associated, attached more importance, than the moderns, to giving every instrument its peculiar effect, and even designating by it the character of the poetry; for it needs no proof to show, that each instrument with its peculiar tone has also, as it were, a peculiar sphere of emotion, in which it is fitted to produce its effect. Hence we have striking examples of what effects certain tones on this or that instrument, which were the favourite airs of an individual hearer, have produced on him. As all the power of musick rests upon its simplicity, the artist with the simple tones of his instrument has the heart of one, with whom it is a favourite, in his power, and plays as it were immediately upon it. In the mean time the harmonious uproar of all instruments, the artificial swell of sound, that reaches the clouds, may indeed enrapture the ear of a connoisseur, but becomes a real Babel to the feelings of one, who wishes only to have his feelings affected. Should the

sisters, who have been separated by art, musick and poetry, once become again more intimately united, we should again hear of "a song for the harp," and "a song for the flute," as in the songs of Asaph and David. By the study of a single instrument we learn the kind of passion, which it awakens, and to distinguish more deeply the tone of feeling, which it excites in the heart; and he, that can happily express this in the language of lyric poetry, will accomplish more than can be done by all the rules of the critical art.

3. Since antiquity and the East, even now, have known nothing of our artificial harmony, since the poetry of the Psalms has only a very free arrangement of metre, and little or no regular scansion according to our method, all attempts to model our language by that, or that by ours, are in vain. Free and indeterminate metrical movements float in the air. Melody and the controlling influence of feeling determine their rythmical balance only in a very general manner. This is shown in the Psalms by the so frequently occurring "Selah." If we compare the most decisive passages, they are found to correspond neither with pauses, nor the *da capo*, nor *intermezzo*, but must mean *change of tone*, which is expressed either by increase of force, or by a transition into another time and mode.\* The subject of the song, or its tone of emotion change, and since the melody was not very definitely marked for the singer and the musical composer, a *nota bene* was attached to the most important passages in the book of Psalms. Songs, which are impassioned in their character, most commonly have it, especially where the subject is changed. In uniformly didactick Psalms and those of loftier tone, which are still uniform, it does not occur. Where

\* From all books of travels we know, that the Orientals are fond of a very uniform, and, as it appears to the Europeans, a very doleful sort of musick, but that in certain places they suddenly change the time, and pass into a different melody. This it probably was, which in the Psalms is designated by "Selah."

it stands at the end, it may show, that they were accustomed to sing another continuously after it, as it is undeniable, that they were fond of thus linking together and associating several different psalms.\* The Greeks translate "Selah by διαψαλμα, which Suidas and others explain by μελωδίας εναλλαγῃ, concentus mutatio. It shows therefore, that such songs were set to musick throughout, only however after the very simple method of the Orientals, which varied with the change in the song which it accompanied. On the whole we find that we have indeed the words of these ancient songs, but that especially in our imitations the living spirit, which depends upon the recital, is far from being attained.

## A SONG OF PRAISE

TO GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUS PROVIDENCE.

THE 92D PSALM. †

A SONG FOR THE SABBATH DAY.

It is good to give thanks to Jehovah,  
To sing praises to thy name, O Most High.  
To show thy loving kindness in the morning,  
Thy faithfulness every night,  
Upon the ten-stringed harp, and the lute,  
The guitar of the sounding strings.

Thou, O Jehovah, hast rejoiced me with thy work,  
I will triumph in the work of thy hands,  
How great, O Lord, are thy works!  
How unfathomable thy counsels!  
The brutish man understandeth it not,  
Neither doth the fool comprehend it.

When the wicked spring up, as the grass,  
And all the workers of iniquity flourish,

\* 1 Chron. 16 is made up of parts from four different psalms. Ps. xxxii. xxxiii. were probably also sung together, and so of others.

† Probably this Psalm, the author of which is unknown, was designed to be sung by the Levites on the Sabbath, and in the temple.

They yet shall perish at the last.  
 But thou, O Jehovah, abidest  
 The Most High, forevermore.  
 Behold, O Jehovah, thine enemies,  
 Behold thine enemies shall perish,  
 All the evil-doers shall be scattered,  
 But my horn shalt thou exalt,  
 As the horn of a wild bullock, \*  
 And I shall be anointed with pure oil.

Mine eye looks with courage on my foes,  
 Mine ear receives the tidings of evil,  
 To the wicked, that rise up against me.  
 The righteous flourish like the palm tree,  
 And grow up like the cedar of Lebanon.  
 Those that are planted in the house of the Lord,  
 Flourish in the courts of our God.  
 They still shoot forth in old age,  
 They are full of sap, and their leaf green,  
 To show that Jehovah is upright,  
 And there is no unrighteousness in him.

\* That is, thou dost raise my courage, and increase my strength. The wild ox is superior to other animals, by the magnitude and elevation of his horn. Hence, his horn is often mentioned, as the symbol of strength and superiority of power. So Moses speaks of Joseph. Deut. xxxiii. 17.



## XI.

### PSALMS RELATING TO THE KING.

The Psalms considered in certain national points of view. Of God as a judge and national God in the temple. Intimations and expressions of the Psalms on this point. Of songs of triumph over other nations in a religious tone. Examples of this. Peaceful and religious scenes in Psalms of a warlike character. Examples. Of the king as a representative of Jehovah in a theocratic government. The second Psalm accompanied with remarks. Of the king as covenanted with Jehovah, who dwelt near him. The 110th Psalm, with remarks. Of the promises respecting the lineage of David. Their influence on the Psalms. The last Psalm of David. The times of Solomon, a Psalm. Celebration of Mount Zion in the Psalms and Prophets.

I am very well aware, that I have by no means exhausted the internal character of the Psalms. But in order to do so an extended investigation of the subject matter, of which they treat, would be requisite, and for that, I have no room in the present work. The finest sayings respecting God, his attributes and works, his government and retributive justice, the protection, which he extends to the good, the worth of prayer, and of uprightness in his sight, are so well known to us through the Psalms and the applications made of them, that a collection of them seems unnecessary. I venture, therefore, only to indicate *certain leading points of view*, which exhibit the subject matter of some of the Psalms, in its proper *relation to the age*, in which they were composed.

1. Elevated and sublime, as are the expressions concerning God, which occur in the Psalms, we must yet bear in mind,

that, especially in those of the age of David, Jehovah is still represented peculiarly as a *national God*, who was worshipped as the king and judge of the land in his temple. This view of the subject gives as much of force to the songs in general, as positive meaning to particular expressions. David contemplated God as the private friend of his person, and his individual fortunes; but in the temple he approached with his confessions and songs, as into the presence of his *judge*. Hence we are to explain the account of his sins, as infirmities or as transgressions, because both were matters to be spoken of in the temple. Hence he ventured to speak with such confidence of his blamelessness in regard to his enemies, because he was here standing before his judge. So in many of the Psalms.\*

Hear, O Jehovah, the righteous, attend to my cry,  
 Hear my prayer, that goeth from pure lips,  
 Before thy presence I seek for my right,  
 Thine eyes behold the things, that are equal.  
 Thou provest my heart, searchest it by night,  
 Thou triest me, and findest no evil in me.  
 For I purposed, that my mouth should not transgress,  
 When I gave sentence in thy stead,  
 In all things I guarded my lips  
 From uttering an injurious word.†  
 I called upon thee, and thou hearest me,  
 So now also incline thine ear and hear,  
 As for me in my innocency  
 I shall behold the face of my judge.

\* Ps. xvii.

† This seems to me, the sense of the words, "to the works of of men, (my subjects) by the word of thy lips, (the judgments and ordinances, which I gave as king in the name of God) I guarded myself from going in the way of violent men, (arbitrary, oppressive tyrants.)" The suppliant expects justice from God, since he has not knowingly said or done evil to any.

**My wishes will be satisfied,  
When thine image awakes.\***

That is, so soon as he shows himself in the character of judge, all these expressions and intimations are judicial. In the East the judge was approached in plain terms, and with a loud cry of complaint, and when he showed himself, when his "likeness" awoke publicly, or he appeared in publick for the administration of justice, he was the helper of the oppressed. Thus it is said,

Let thy face shine upon us,  
And we shall be saved:  
Thou saidst, Lord; ye shall seek my face,  
I seek it Lord, hide it not from me.

So many other forms of expression in these publick national prayers and lamentations before their God.

2. When, therefore, in triumphal and national songs, also, Jehovah is placed in opposition to the gods of other nations, it is for the most part in this *special*, national sense.†

Not unto us, O Jehovah, not unto us,  
To thy name alone be the glory,  
For thy mercy and thy truths sake.  
Let the nations say, "Where is now your God?  
Our God is in the heavens,  
And doeth whatsoever he will.  
But their idols, silver and gold,  
Are the work of men's hands.  
They have mouths, and speak not,  
They have eyes, and see not,  
They have ears, and hear not,  
They have noses, and smell not,  
They have hands, and handle not,  
They have feet, and walk not,

\* The context and parallelism require, that the "awaking of the likeness" be preferred to God, and correspond with "face."

† Ps. cxv.

Nor do they speak through their throat,  
 Like them are they that made them,  
 And every one, that trusteth in them.

O Israel, trust thou in Jehovah,  
 He is your help, and your shield,  
 O house of Aaron, trust in Jehovah,  
 He is your help, and your shield.  
 Ye, that fear Jehovah, trust in him,  
 He is your help, and your shield.

If we take from these Psalms the peculiar national feeling, which accompanied them, we deprive them of a great part of their force, and of their original import.

In Judah God is known,\*  
 His name is great in Israel,  
 In Salem is his tabernacle,  
 And his dwelling place in Zion.  
 There brake he the arrows of the bow,  
 The shield, and sword, and battle. (Change of tone.)  
 Glorious art thou, O mountain,  
 Mightier than the mountains of prey.  
 They stand despoiled of themselves,  
 Even the brave! they have slept their sleep,  
 And none of the men of might find their hands.  
 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,  
 The rider and horse are in a dead sleep.  
 How terrible art thou!  
 Who can stand in thy sight,  
 Before the breath of thy fury?  
 Thou didst thunder judgment from heaven,  
 The earth feared, and was silent.  
 When thou didst arise to judgment,  
 To save the oppressed of the earth. (Change of tone.)  
 The wrath of man giveth thee but praise,  
 The remainder of it thou girdest to thee,  
 As the symbol of thy triumph.  
 Make thy vows, and bring triumphal gifts  
 To Jehovah your God.

All ye borders of the land,  
 Bring your triumphal gifts  
 To him that is to be feared.  
 He bindeth the pride of heroes,  
 He is terrible to the kings of the earth.

We know not what event this triumphal song celebrates ; but every trait is as strictly national, as Salem, Zion, and Jehovah were peculiar to the Hebrews. In our warlike and triumphal songs the most apposite expressions of this sort from the Psalms are but withered laurels.

### A MORNING SONG OF DAVID.

#### PSALM 108.

O God, my heart is ready,  
 I will sing and give praise.  
 Awake, my soul, awake,  
 Psalter and harp,

I will awake early,  
 I will praise thee, O Lord ;  
 I will sing praises to thee  
 Before the people and nation.

For thy goodness is great,  
 It reacheth above the heavens.\*  
 Thy covenanted truth O Lord,  
 Reacheth above the clouds.

Exalt thyself, O God, above the heavens,  
 That thy glory may cover the earth.†  
 Deliver thou thy beloved,  
 Save with thy right hand, and hear.

God heard, and spake in his sanctuary, †  
 Therefore will I rejoice.  
 For already I divide Shechem as mine,

\* In allusion to the morning sky rising and freeing itself from clouds.

† An allusion to the morning light.

‡ A common expression of the favour of Jehovah. (See Ps. lxxxv. 9.)  
 The following words are not spoken by God, but by David.

And measure out the vale of Succoth.\*

Gilead is mine, Manassah is mine,  
Ephraim my helmet, Judah the leader in war.  
Moab is my wash-pot,†  
Upon Edom I cast my shoe,  
And treat the Philistines with scorn.

Who brought us into the strong city?  
Who guided us into Edom?  
Was it not thou, O God, who also didst cast us off,  
And didst not go forth with our armies.

Help us again in our necessities,  
For vain is the help of man.

Through God we yet shall do valiantly,  
He treadeth the enemy under our feet.

I know no people, in whose war-songs were mingled thoughts so gentle as we find here. The most feeling prayer and lamentation may be nearly connected with feelings of the greatest bravery and warlike sternness. It was obviously the refined moral regulations of Moses, which gave even to the war-songs of so early an age this milder and gentler tone. The severity found in them belongs to the age, the tenderness and refinement is the effect of their religion.

3. Hence, we see, also, that passages of the greatest sensibility, relating to domestick happiness, are mingled with warlike descriptions, and frequently from the most heroick sentiments there is a transition to the tone of elegy. The former circumstance happens sometimes from the union of several distinct Psalms, as in the 144th. The first eight verses are a distinct Psalm, and with the 9th a new one begins, which

\* These are not conquered countries, but the property of David as king. He begins with a glad heart to enumerate the blessings of the inheritance, which God had given him. He names first, Shechem, and the valley of Succoth, because these were the residence of Jacob, and therefore the most ancient inheritance of the Jews, by right of the patriarch.

† Here begins the enumeration of his conquests and victories.

again from speaking of enemies turns suddenly to the prosperity of Judæa.

That our sons, like vigorous trees,  
 May grow up in the beauty of youth ;  
 And our daughters, as beautiful pillars,  
 Polished like statues in the palace ;  
 That our garners may be full,  
 Yielding all manner of store,  
 Our sheep bring forth thousands,  
 Yea ten thousands in our valleys ;  
 Our oxen be strong, and no lamentation,  
 No damage, or loss in our fields.  
 Happy the nation, that is thus,  
 Happy the nation, whose God is Jehovah.

In the 65th Psalm is a similar transition from war-like to rural thoughts. How beautiful is the image, when the shepherd of Israel, who is invoked for purposes of war, feeds his people as a shepherd.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
 That leadest Joseph like a flock.  
 Thou, that art throned above the cherubim,  
 Let the light of thy countenance shine.  
 Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manassah,  
 Awake thy strength, and come and save us.  
*Revive us again O God,*  
*Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved,*  
 Jehovah, God of Sabaoth,  
 How long art thou angry amid the prayers of thy people ?  
 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears,  
 And givest tears for drink in a full cup.  
 Thou has made us a reproach to our neighbours,  
 A scoffing to our enemies round about.  
*Revive us again, O God of Sabaoth,*  
*Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.*  
 Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt,  
 Thou didst cast out the nations and plant it,  
 Give it room and cause it to take root,

**That it filled the land.**

**Its shadow covered the hills around,  
And cedars of God were its boughs,  
Thou sentest its branches to the sea,  
Its runners even to the Euphrates.**

**Why then dost thou break down its walls,  
So that all, who pass by, despoil it?  
The boar from the wood doth waste it,  
The wild beast doth devour it.**

**O God of Sabaoth, return to us again,  
Look down from heaven and behold,  
And visit again thy vine,  
Which thy right hand hath planted  
It is burned with fire, it is cut down,  
It is withered at the breath of thine anger.**

**Let thy hand be upon our leader,  
Thy right hand upon him, whom thou hast made strong;  
So shall we never revolt from thee,  
Revive us, and we will rejoice in thee.**

*Jehovah, God of Sabaoth,*

*Revive us again,*

*Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.*

This beautiful elegy, with its recurring chorus, is wholly theocratic. It rests on the history of the nation, and only toward the end (v. 18.) do we discover the continuous allegory of the man and hero, who is now to act in the name of Jehovah.

4. As Israel was a theocratic state, and every hero and ruler acted in the place of Jehovah, so the language, when these are spoken of, has a peculiar loftiness and solemn dignity. Even in the historical style it could be said, in the form of expression which they admitted, *that he was seated on the throne of Jehovah*,\* and in poetry, that he was a son of God, that is, his representative on earth. Every one knows the various uses of the word *son* in the Hebrew language. The

\*1 Chron. xxix, 23. His kingdom is called the kingdom of Jehovah. 1 Chron. xxviii. 5.



connexion of simple domestic relations with ancient government and cultivation rendered it a favourite expression. In calling kings the sons of God\* it employs a form of expression common to all ancient languages, and other Oriental nations have gone still farther in a thousand titles and names.† In such passages as the following therefore the meaning is plain.‡

I have found David my servant,  
 I have anointed him with my holy oil.  
 With him shall my hand be mighty,  
 Him also shall mine arm strengthen,  
 That no enemy may terrify him.  
 I will beat down his foes before him,  
 And will smite those that hate him.  
 My truth and mercy shall be with him,  
 And in my name shall his horn be exalted,  
 That his hand may be stretched to the sea,  
 His right hand to the river Euphrates.  
*He shall say to me, thou art my father,  
 My God and the rock of my salvation.  
 I make him also my first born,  
 Exalted above all the kings of the earth.*

The last lines explain the expression *son of Jehovah, first born of Jehovah*, so clearly, that I venture to add here the 2d Psalm, as of the same character, and authentically elucidated by this song of Heman.

#### THE 2d PSALM.

What tumult reigns among the nations!

\* The *διογενεις* of Homer are known to every one,

† They call themselves sons of heaven, of the sun, the moon, &c.

‡ Ps. lxxxix. 20.

Why do they clamour with empty noise ?\*

The kings of the earth rise up,

The princes build projects together†

Against Jehovah and his anointed.‡

“Let us brake their bands asunder,

“And cast away their fetters from us.”

He, that is throned in heaven, shall laugh,  
Jehovah holdeth them in derision.

He speaketh to them in his wrath,  
And scattereth them in his fierce anger. ||

“I have set my king upon my throne,

Upon my holy mountain Zion.”§

I will also declare the divine decree,¶  
Jehovah said unto me,

“Thou art my son,

“So be it from this day forth.”\*\*

Ask of me,

And nations shall be thine inheritance,

\* I adhere to the simplicity of the ancient versions, which translate here “empty, vain,” the usual sense of the word. The verb also corresponds well with this, and signifies the empty uproar of a multitude. The poet has here in a single word imaged the import of the whole ode, which only unfolds this lofty sentiment with which it begins.

† I have preserved the metaphor of the original, which is here indeed only an incidental import of the word, because the idea of the whole ode has a resemblance to the history in Gen. xi.

‡ Jehovah and his earthly *representative* stand side by side, and as one person throughout. The latter is here only *in the name* of the former, and has his dignity from him.

|| He speaks to them in the thunder, and with lightning disperses them. The parallelism finely expresses the image, and the words of the following verses are the brief and sublime sentence of Jehovah, uttered in the thunder.

§ I follow the Hebrew text here in using the first instead of the third person, and consider God as the speaker in the two last lines, as the whole context and other parallel passages show to have been intended.

¶ Properly the law of the realm, the new constitution of the government. Henceforth God will reign through him, as his representative.

\*\* These two lines are parallel, the sense of the latter the same as that of the former. The same parallelism occurs Is. ix. 6, and in Acts xiii, 34. the passage is applied to a new king,

The uttermost parts of the earth thy possession.\*

Thou shalt smite them with an iron sceptre,

And dash them as a potters vessel.

Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings,

Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

Obey Jehovah with fear,†

And honour him with trembling.

Do homage to the son, lest he be angry,

And bring destruction on you by the way,‡

For soon his wrath will be kindled,

And happy they, who are faithful to him.¶

Every one may observe here the beautiful lyrical progress of the Psalm. It begins boldly and abruptly with “a quo ? quo scelesti ruitis?” and sketches in few words the whole picture of their tumult, their conspiracy, their vain undertaking. A glance from heaven, a smile of scorn from the king of heaven renders all their counsels vain. He speaks to them in thunders, and one lightning flash drives them asunder. The poet hears and interprets the voice. It was brief and majestic, such as only he might utter, who is throned in heaven. The king upon earth distinctly explains his ordinances. He gives them counsel and instruction, but little time for deliberation, and closes with a sentiment addressed to the faithful of the land.

\* I leave to the Psalm here its loftiness of expression, the kings, the boundaries, the judges of *the earth*, as belonging to the age. The Psalmist did not consider geographically the relative magnitude of Judæa. It was to him simply the central point, where God reigned as king.

† I take the expression literally as meaning *circuire*. The vassals of Oriental kings stood in a circle around the throne, and going round the altar was a common act of religious worship.

‡ As much as to say, you have no time to deliberate. The image is taken from the caravans, which perish by the simoom.

¶ *Trust, faith*, in the Psalms often mean fidelity, as of subjects to their sovereign.

But to whom does it relate? For whom was a picture so animated originally designed? I know not, if we would judge of it, uninfluenced by foreign impressions, for what other person it could have been originally composed, than for David. Who dwelt upon Mount Zion at the time of its composition? Whom did God set as his son and representative upon this mountain according to other Psalms of plain import? Who had as many enemies as he, both in and out of Judæa? And who triumphed so gloriously over all these enemies? Half the Psalms are full of this subject, and yet, in regard to this, we proceed as if we had read nothing of it. All the expressions, which occur here, are elsewhere also applied to David, and the whole view presented by the ode is obviously correspondent, both in place and time, to the purpose for which it was composed. The nations marshal themselves for war. They are terrified, and proclamation made to them, with brief space allowed to deliberate—who does not see, that the bow is drawn for aiming at a present object. Place the object aimed at the distance of a thousand years, and the arrow flies in vain. The finest lyrical construction of a most impressive ode is lost, we deprive it of its local nation and origin, of its peculiar purpose and meaning.

“But the Psalm is introduced in the New Testament.” Yes! as a *Psalm for the king*, and with reference to *Him*, who sat and was forever to sit upon *the throne of David*. Must we not, therefore, know how David was enthroned there? And can we learn this otherwise than from the circumstances of his age, the representations of his own songs? The *application* of it in the New Testament so far from excluding, confirms rather its original meaning as descriptive of David.

5. As David, therefore, was enthroned upon the same holy mountain with God, that is, upon a mount of kingly majesty *in his place*, and on *his throne*, so expressions came into use, which celebrate him, as the *covenanted ally* and *friend* of

**God. He had brought Jehovah upon mount Zion, and sworn allegiance to the mighty one of Jacob. \***

I will not enter the tabernacle of my house,  
Nor go up upon my bed of rest,  
I will give no sleep to mine eyes;  
Nor slumber to mine eyelids,  
Till I find a resting place for Jehovah,  
A habitation for the mighty one of Jacob.  
Lo we heard of it in Ephrata,  
We found it in the wild fields of Jaar;  
Let us enter I said into his tabernacle,  
Let us worship at his footstool.  
Arise Jehovah, come to thy rest,  
Thou, and the ark of thy heroism.  
Thy priests shall be clothed with judgment,  
Thy saints shall shout for joy.

David performed this vow, and we know how richly God requited him. He gave him rest from his enemies, promised him a perpetual lineage, and continued blessings. The king places himself with humility *before the face of God*, and renders his thanksgivings, while he sits crowned with victory, *in his house*, upon the holy mount. All these expressions belong to historical narrative,† and the original local import of the following Psalm, therefore, would seem also to be placed beyond question.

**THE 110th PSALM.**

Jehovah said to the king,  
Sit thou upon my right hand,†  
Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.  
From Zion now Jehovah reaches forth

**\*Ps. cxxxii.**

† 2 Sam. vii. 1. 18. 1 Chron. xvii. 16.

† At the right hand means often at the side of God. (Ps. xci. 7. xvi. 8. 11. cix. 31. 121. 5. God gives him a place of rest and honour on mount Zion, and beside his temple, till he has subdued for him all his foes.

The sceptre of his power abroad,\*  
 "Be thou king amidst thine enemies.†  
 Freewill offerings are with thee,  
 In the day of thy triumph,  
 Upon my holy mountain.  
 From the bosom of the dawn, as the dew,  
 Have I produced thee for myself.‡  
 Jehovah has sworn and repenteth not.||  
 "Thou shalt be my priest fowever,  
 I ordain thee my Melchisedek.¶  
 Jehovah, at thy right hand,¶  
 Shall crush the kings in the day of his wrath,

\*The sceptre of the king. Jehovah now stretches it out in his name and as his ally upon mount Zion.

†Most of the enemies of David were still unconquered, when he went to Zion, and carried thither the ark of Jehovah.

‡The author has a long note on this passage, which I venture chiefly to omit, as I believe his conjectures have met with no favour among the critics. His rendering is defended mainly by a conjectural alteration of the text. Tr.

||The inviolable covenant, which God made with David, is in 2 Sam. vii. where the words "forever and ever," are often repeated. David himself regards it as a covenant obligation, 2 (Sam. vii. 19.) and so speaks of it in his last words. (2 Sam. xxiii, 5.)

¶It is well known, that the word here rendered "priest" designates one who might approach near to God, and it would seem, that the nearness of David to God led to its use. But the parrallelism *king of righteousness*, shows clearly enough its meaning. Such originally the priests were to be, and when David brought the ark to Zion he sought to invest them again with that character. (See Ps. cxxxix. 9. How far it was carried we know not, it is enough, that 2 Sam. viii. 18. the sons of David were priests, i. e. judges, and David therefore the highest priest of righteousness, here by a fine allusion called Melchisedek. In the very place, where David resided, this venerable patriarch had once been a priest of righteousness and king of peace.

But what is the expression "after the order"? The parallellism shows, that it is the oath, by which the family of David was raised perpetually to the regal and priestly dignity. It is the same with decree in the 2d, Psalm.

¶The expression here does not relate to rank and dignity, but it is to be taken as in Ps. xvi. 8. 11. Ps xci. 7. and means *by the side*.

Shall sit as judge among the nations—  
 Then shall the land be full of dead bodies,  
 And wounded heads lie far around.  
 He shall drink of the brook in the way,  
 And lift his head again with pride.\*

A beautiful ode ! the plan of which need not be hidden or unintelligible to us. It says to David, in his triumphal entry upon mount Zion, that he may now *be at rest* by the dwelling place of Jehovah, and, though encompassed with enemies, reign securely ; for God is now at his side, as his covenanted ally, who will sit in judgment among the nations. Clothed with new dignity, he now dwells near to God, who stretches forth for him a sceptre, which all obey. He is now King of righteousness, a priest of God in Salem. What the muses are to Horace, the same are the holy oracles of God to the Hebrew poet.

Vos Cæsarem altum, militiæ simul  
 Fessa cohortes abdidit oppidis  
 Finire quærentem labores,  
 Pierio recreatis antro.  
 Vos lenè consilium et datis et dato  
 Gaudetis almæ.—†

As introduced in the New Testament, also, this Psalm expresses the sense, that a higher king, after toil and suffering, is now *to rest* at the right hand of his heavenly father, until he shall sit in judgment among the nations, and bring all things under his feet.

6. A promise was given to the offspring of David, that it should abide *forever*, that God should *establiish* it upon the throne of David its father, and that its prosperity should be still *more widely* extended. We find this promise and the occasion of it historically related,‡ and observe at the same

\*The image is from the history of Samson.

† Lib. 3. Ode 4.

‡ 2. Sam. vii.

time in how eminent a sense David received this promise.\* He looked upon it as a family league, as a compact after the manner of men,† rendered thanks to God for it, and in his last song‡ still celebrated it, as a covenant respecting his kingdom confirmed by God. This fair and certain prospect is exhibited in the Psalms. God is often reminded of his promise, David is congratulated in regard to this perpetual covenant, and finally the future reign of his lineage is pictured with all the glowing colours of a golden age. Let us look at a proof of this.

### THE LAST SONG OF DAVID.

2 SAM. xxiii. 1—7.

So spake David, the son of Jesse,  
The man, whom God exalted,  
The anointed of the God of Jacob,  
And the sweet Psalmist of Israel.

The Spirit of God speaketh in me,  
His word is on my tongue.  
For thus spake Israel's God,  
Thus said to me the Rock of Israel.  
“A ruler of men, a just prince,||  
A king ruling in the fear of God,  
Shall go forth as the morning dawn,  
And as the rising sun.  
It scattereth the clouds away,  
And from the abundant dews  
Green herbage springs from the earth.”

My house stands therefore fast with God. §  
He made with me a covenant forever,  
Well ordered in all things and sure,  
For he is all my salvation, and all my desire.

But thus shall not the Belials take root,

\* 2. Sam. vii. 18.    † 2 Sam. vii. 19.    ‡ 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

|| See Briefe das Studium der Theologie betreffend, Th. 1. S. 133.

§ The word usually here read as a particle, is a noun or verb; recte ergo disposite, facto confirmata stat domus mea. *With God* is David's frequent and favourite expression.



They shall be as thorns thrust away,  
 That cannot be taken by the hand.  
 The man, that will touch them,  
 Must arm his hand with sword and spear.  
 The fire shall burn them and their dwelling.

Thus the aged king applied the divine declaration to the rebels, and dissatisfied spirits of his kingdom, whom Solomon also removed out of the way. But the reign of his offspring was not to be wholly in the spirit of revenge.—It was rather to diffuse new life and warmth, as represented in the 72d Psalm, under the same image of the dew and morning sun, which occurs in these last words.

### THE TIMES OF SOLOMON.

#### THE 72d PSALM.

Give to the king thy judgments, O God,  
 And thy tribunal to the king's son.\*  
 He will rule thy people righteously,  
 And protect the oppressed in judgment.  
 The mountains shall speak peace to the people,  
 The hills proclaim to them righteousness,†  
 That he may aid the oppressed of the people,  
 That he may save the sons of the needy,  
 And break in pieces the oppressor.  
 So long as sun and moon endure,  
 Shall they fear thee through all generations.‡  
 He shall come down,  
 As rain upon the mown grass,  
 As showers, that water the earth.  
 In his reign shall the righteous flourish,  
 And happiness abound while the moon endureth.

\* The parallelism shows, that it is intended to congratulate the first, the king.

† Mountains and hills as Ps. ii. cx. The verb is not expressed in the second line.

‡ This would seem to be another voice speaking. The picture presented is a paraphrase of the "forever and ever," that so often occurs in 2 Sam. vii.

His dominion is from sea to sea,\*  
 From the river to the end of the earth.  
 The dwellers in the desert bow before him,†  
 And his enemies lick the dust.  
 The kings of Tarshish and the isles  
 Bring presents to him,‡  
 The kings of Sheba and of Seba,  
 Pay their homage with gifts.¶  
 All kings fall down before him,  
 And all nations serve him.

For he helpeth the poor that crieth,  
 And the oppressed, who hath no helper.  
 He spareth the weak and the needy,  
 He saveth the life of the distressed,  
 He delivereth it from deceit and violence,  
 For his blood is precious in his sight.  
 He shall live, and they shall bring him gold of Sheba,  
 They shall pray for him continually,  
 And daily shall they bless him.

In heaps shall the earth produce its corn,  
 Its fruit shall rustle upon the mountains,  
 As the rustling trees of Libanus.  
 The cities shall flourish with people,  
 Like the grass-covered field.

His name shall endure forever,  
 It shall be continued as long as the sun.  
 Men shall bless themselves in his name,§  
 All nations shall bless him.

With this the first Psalms of David close, and they could close with none better. In it the blessings of Abraham, Judah, and David are brought together, and the ideal concep-

\* The parallelism shows, that one sea is the Euphrates, and the other the Mediterranean.

† Arabick and other tribes, whom David had subdued.

‡ Trading nations, not only islands, but the coasts of Europe.

¶ Probably Arabia and Ethiopia. The history of the queen of Sheba is known.

§ That is, when they would speak of happy times, they should call them the reign of Solomon.

tions of the Prophets respecting a future reign, like that of Solomon, proceeded from these as their models. In the Psalms, too, when quiet happiness is represented, the name of Solomon characterizes it, and that golden epithalamium in the 45th sings of a righteous sceptre, a peaceful reign, a kindness to the oppressed, in the very style and language of this promise.

Mount Zion also, the seat of the ever flourishing realm of David, accompanied it in like manner to later times. Small as it was, it was to become the chief of the nations ; dry and parched as it was, from it were to flow living streams. From Zion was to go forth the law, and the doctrine, which should bless all nations. For the king of this mountain was to preserve for the earth tranquility, joy, light, and blessedness.

Its foundation is in the holy mountains,  
Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion,  
More than all the dwellings of Israel.

Glorious words are spoken of thee,  
O thou city of God.\* (Change of tone,)

"Egypt and Babylon will be counted  
To the nation, that acknowledgeth me.

Philistia, Ethiopia, and Tyre  
Shall be as those born there.

To Zion it shall be said,  
This and that man were born in her.

The Highest himself hath founded her,  
Jehovah himself counts to her her people,

"This and that man was born there."

The princes as well as the least,  
All rejoice in her.†

What praise is this, with which in lyric garlands, this city of God, the royal city, is adorned ! All shall come together here, as to its proper home. In it are sacred songs and jubilant dances, in which rich and poor form one responsive

\* The oracle is here introduced, and hence the change of tone.

† The reading of the last lines is doubtful.

chorus. We may call to mind many other Psalms, in which Salem is represented, as the city of God, and of an everlasting kingdom, as the head of the nations of the earth, and anticipate the rich development of the Prophets.

**NOTE.** The author inserts here a piece of poetry of several pages, by J. H. Schmid, a German, which I venture to omit. Tr.

## XII.

General view of the period under David and Solomon. What we have  
• still extant from the productions of that period. Influence of these on the writings of the Prophets. By what causes the spirit of the Prophets was awakened and animated. Proofs in respect to Hosea and Isaiah. The new lineage of David and Son of God. Images of royalty. Their origin, and development of their traits from ancient prophecies and Psalms. How the fortunes of David were applied by the Prophets. How Jerusalem and Zion are employed in their figurative language. Specimens. Principle on which they unfolded ancient promises and historical incidents. Difference between the higher and lower economy of God. Comparison of Moses with some other distinguished individuals of biblical history.

Under the reign of David and Solomon Judæa, considered as a kingdom, was in the most flourishing condition, which it ever attained. It extended from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and from the desert in the South to Mount Libanus. Its kings were respected, and the country enjoyed the advantages of its beautiful situation, even in regard to commerce. The natural consequence was, that the names of these kings became classical in history and poetry for all succeeding times. Their age was alone renowned, so long as kings continued to reign. For these it was now their highest glory, that they sat upon the *throne of David*, and were privileged to call themselves his *sons and successors*. Such they were, but not in regard to his prosperity. For, Solomon alone excepted, (and even his reign scarcely reached the expectations, that were indulged, and by no means to the ideal of the 72d Psalm) the kingdom of David, as a whole, soon went down. It was divided after the death of Solomon, and the smaller part only fell to the family of David. Both kingdoms

were the theatre of commotion and anarchy, and subject to the frequent incursions of their neighbours, until all was lost in the captivity. The species of poetry, therefore, which is the daughter of victory, of tranquility, and prosperity, found no longer an age so splendid and favourable for its production, as it enjoyed under David and Solomon.

It is matter of regret, too, that of the productions of that period nothing remains to us, but the songs of the temple, and such as relate personally to the king and to the kingdom. For it is plain, that the Psalms, and the writings of Solomon are devoted to one or the other of these purposes. The bridal song of the 45th Psalm has only been preserved to us, because it celebrated the praises of a king, and the hopes of his kingdom, out of divine oracles, and was also valued as of a religious character. The Song of Solomon and the Proverbs would not have been preserved, had they not been adorned with the name of Solomon, and had not the later age, when these writings were collected, found in the former already a favourite mystical sense, a description of a future period like the reign of Solomon. As a bridal and love song of any other poet, it would never have been preserved.—We have, therefore, from the most flourishing period of Hebrew poetry but a scanty remnant, such as could be saved in the general wreck of the captivity, by reverence for the names of their ancient kings, their religion, and the history of the kingdom. The voice of the bridegroom and the bride,\* those joyous songs of the harvest and the vintage,† of which mention is so often made, are no longer extant. The voice of the grinder at the mill,‡ and of other kinds of employment, is silent, and all the daughters of musick are sleeping in the dust. As an emerald set in gold, so is the melody of musick with festive wine,|| but it is heard no more. The joy and mirth of their rural feasts are swept away from their fields, and we hear no more the

\* Jer. vii. 34.

† Isa. ix. 3. Jer. xxv. 10.

‡ Eccl. xii. 4.

|| Sirach xxvii. 5.

*hedad*, the jubilant cry of the wine treader in his song.\* How unfair is it then, to compare the poetry of this people, as a whole, with that of other nations, when we have but one or two branches of the tree, the poetry connected with religious worship, and that relating to the king, or what was considered as such. The remainder was not collected, or was lost.

But as the songs of Moses, so the Psalms, as illustrative of these, had a great influence on later times. They were (probably at first only to the 72d psalm) the song book of the nation, or at least of the temple and of the Prophets. In looking at the individual characters of the latter, we shall see how closely they adhered to the language of the sanctuary, and how richly they paraphrased them in their animated appeals. It will now be my purpose only to show in general the influence which the so called Messiah or royal psalms have had on the voices of the Prophets; and I say in a word, *that these, together with the ancient prophecies, have not only awakened the voice of the Prophets, but the rich and expanded views of these latter are obviously the development of the former.*

1. To the offspring of David were given by divine declarations great promises respecting an *everlasting kingdom*, a *new establishment* of it, and a future *period of great happiness and prosperity*. As then the kingdom, through the fault of Solomon, Rehoboam, and other kings, was sunk into a low condition, when God at length awoke the voice of the Prophets, what could they say to the people other than "ye are fallen and debased." What else could Hosea say to the kingdom of Israel, but "turn again to the righteous Jehovah, for ye have gone astray. Instead of going to the calves, go into the deserts of Judah, to the temple of him to whom ye belong, he will meet you, and receive you graciously."†

I will betroth thee unto me forever,†

\* Jer. xlviii. 33. †Hos. ii. 14. xiv. ii. †Hos. ii. 19,

I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness,  
 In judgment, in loving kindness, and mercy.  
 In faithfulness will I betroth thee,  
 And thou shall again acknowledge Jehovah...

822

It is the wish of the Prophet, that Israel and Judah should again become one kingdom, and he represents the re-union under the symbol of a marriage. This sentiment pervades his whole Prophecy, and is of political import. He allures them with a voice of friendship back to the wilderness of Judah, to the House of God, and the family of David,\* that they too may enjoy the blessings, which were promised that line of kings. For all the more ancient blessings of Abraham, of Judah, and Moses, were confirmed by the divine declarations and the Psalms to the offspring of David. He foresees, also, future times of happiness, in which

The erring children of Israel return,  
 And seek Jehovah, their God, and David, their king,  
 And honour Jehovah, and his fatherly kindness,  
 In the latter days.

So spake a Prophet of Israel, and the sages in the kingdom of Judah must still more clearly unfold their views concerning these ancient blessings, and ordinances of the realm. When Israel was often laid waste, and even now was on the point of being carried away captive, God awoke in the scarcely more happy Judah the voices of many Prophets at once, which the spirit of Isaiah was probably instrumental, if not in originally calling forth, at least in animating and encouraging. They saw the fate of their sister kingdom, the greatest part of the nation, they felt their own misery, and turned themselves back for encouragement to those Prophecies, which God had given concerning the race and lineage of David. The stock of David stood contemned, small, and almost dried up; but with strong

\* Hosea ii. 11. vi. 1.



faith in the inviolable word of God, and the oath, which he had sworn to David, they saw a new shoot arise from its root, and to that they applied all the blessings, which God had pronounced in ancient times. This is the key to Isaiah's first images.

### THE NEW LINEAGE OF DAVID.\*

Behold ! Jehovah, Jehovah Sabaoth,  
Smites off the branch with fearful crash,  
The lofty trunks are hewn down,  
The proudly exalted are humbled,  
The thick forest is cut down with the axe,  
The groves of Libanus by a mighty arm.

But a new branch springs from the stem of Jesse,  
A shoot shall grow up from his roots,  
And the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him,  
The spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
The spirit of prudence and of heroism,  
The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah,  
And cause him to breathe in the fear of Jehovah.

He judgeth not by the sight of the eye,  
Nor decideth by the hearing of the ear.  
He giveth judgment to the poor uprightly,  
Avengeth with equity the oppressed,  
And smiteth the land with his royal word,  
With the breath of his lips he slayeth the wicked.  
With righteousness he girdeth his loins,  
And faithfulness is the girdle of his reins.—  
And then shall the root of Jesse  
Become as the banner of the (ancient) tribe,  
For which the nations shall enquire,  
And count it glorious to enjoy the rest it gives.

It would be strange, if every one, acquainted with the ancient Prophecies respecting Judah and the lineage of David, did not recognise in every trait the development of their ex-

\* Isa. x. 33. xi. 1—10.

pressions and images. The staff of Judah is known from the blessing of Jacob, and grew into the royal sceptre of David. Now it is dried up to the root, and the Prophet sees a new shoot spring forth, which becomes again a leader, and an army banner, as Judah was once destined to be. The nations enquire after it, and consider its protection, honor, safety, and tranquility; as formerly the nations were to depend on Judah for support. All the attributes of the future monarch are from the history of Solomon, and the blessings pronounced upon him. He was renowned for his wisdom, and the future Solomon is to excel him sevenfold in wisdom and divine gifts. The pictures of the righteousness of his reign are from the Psalms, which relate to Solomon, as well as the beautiful picture of a golden age under his dominion, which immediately follows the above, and which I have not translated. Even the peculiar expression, "to breath or smell in the fear of Jehovah," seems to have been occasioned by the oracular language in the last words of David.\* The Prophet unfolded the ancient oracles, and combined them into an image, that might awaken and confirm the faith of his people. I add here in like manner another passage, which has been misinterpreted, or thought obscure, only perhaps because its relation to the ancient Psalms and historical incidents was not observed.†

They pass distressed and hungry through the land,  
And in their hunger fret themselves,  
And curse their God and king.  
They look toward heaven, and toward the earth,  
But darkness and distress are over all,

\* According to this a ruler was promised, who should rule in the fear of God. Isaiah who is fond of paranomasia has put together several like words.

† Isa. viii. 21—ix. 7.

**Thick darkness, and redoubled night.\***

No dimness now, where late thick darkness reigned,  
Like those old times, when he in Zebulon  
And Naphthali at first threw off the yoke.  
He renders glorious in the latter days  
The country by the sea beyond the Jordan,  
The anarchy of nations.  
The people that were walking in darkness,  
Behold a great light.  
The dwellers in the land of blackest night,  
On them hath light shone forth.

The people are increased, and great too is their joy.†  
They joy before thee like the joy of harvest,  
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

For thou didst break their heavy yoke,  
The rod which smote their shoulders,  
The sceptre of their oppressors,  
As in the time of Midian.

The Prophet could not have said more distinctly, at what he aimed in every thing, and from whence his images were drawn. These were from the times of Midian, and therefore from the victorious times of the Judges. At that period in the North part of the country a great deliverance was wrought.‡ Then in the obscure forests of Naphthali and Zebulon the light of freedom went forth over all the land. So now also in this Northern press of nations; in the way along the sea of Galilee, where now the hostile Syrians are exercising their oppressions, the light of freedom is going forth, and there shall be joy and jubilee, like that of the song of Deborah.

\* It is the method of Isaiah to contrast the present and melancholy with the future and happy condition, and these must be taken together here, though in different chapters.

† I take the particle here for the interjection, expressing a wish, and a feeling of joy, *utinam*, *O si!* as it often occurs.

‡ Jud. iv. 5. In Harosheth i. e. the forest of nations, as now in Galilee, in the heaped up, confused nations, which pressed upon them from above.

For all the weapons of tumultuous war.  
And all the warriors harness, dipped in blood,  
Shall now be burned, as fuel for the flame—

For unto us a king is born,  
And unto us a son is given.  
The staff shall be upon his shoulder,  
His name is called, *the wonderful*,  
The counsellor, the mighty hero,  
My father to eternity,  
The prince of peace.

Could the Prophet indicate his purpose in any way more distinctly? He does not surely speak of a Hezekiah, or of his son, as if he were writing a birth-day ode, but of a king, who should bear all the names and blessings of the offspring of David, and bring the promised golden age. He is called therefore, *son*, and *begotten*, i. e. the begotten of God, an expression already consecrated by the Psalms. The *Sceptre*, which Judah bore before his feet, he lays *upon his shoulder*—and thus in him revives Judah, the ancient prince of the tribes. His name is called *wonderful*! and so David often called himself, when as the stone, that was rejected, he had now become the corner stone.\* So the angel called himself, who announced the birth of Sampson.† He is called *counsellor* and *mighty hero*, for Isaiah usually couples the two together to intimate, that he is to be prudent in counsel, and mighty in deeds, as was remarked in treating of the pre-previous prophecy. *My father henceforth forever* he calls him also, and does not venture even to change the grammatical peculiarity of person, which often stands in the Psalms and benedictions, “he shall call me, my father! and I will establish his kingdom forever.”‡ Finally *prince of peace*, as the name of Solomon imports, and as the Psalms explain it. The Prophet compresses into the names all which he could

\* Ps. cxviii. 22, 23. † Jud. xiii. 18. ‡ Ps. lxxxix. 27. 2 Sam. vii 14.

bring together concerning the blessings and the glory of the offspring of David.

And great shall his dominion be,  
 And endiess peace shall reign  
 Upon the throne of David in his kingdom,  
 That he may order and establish it,  
 With righteousness and judgment  
 From henceforth and forevermore.  
 The zeal of Jehovah Sabaoth  
 Will perform this.

That is zeal for his own honour, for all these words were promises of God respecting the lineage of David, which are here repeated.

I cannot indulge myself in a description of the golden age, which the Prophets connect with the reign of this new king, the general amount of the whole is however, that he was to be a shepherd like David, a peaceful prince like Solomon, a righteous judge, a mighty hero, and a restorer of the fear of Jehovah. The presence of Jehovah, his righteousness, goodness and saving efficacy were to be manifested in him, and he was to be addressed with the acclamation, *Jehovah our righteousness, Jehovah our helper*. In treating of the Prophets we shall enquire concerning the origin of these denominations, and it will appear, that among them, before and during the captivity, the name of *a king, of a new David*, was used. Afterwards, when the government was divided between the prince and the high-priest, Zechariah saw the two anointed ones stand before the throne of Jehovah.\* Now therefore the representation of the shoot from the stock of David became also biform, though varying according to the circumstances of the time. He was to build the temple of the Lord like Solomon, and in the temple to bear the magnificent apparel of the high priest. He was to reign on the throne established by Jehovah, but also to

\* Zech. 4. xiv.

be a priest upon his throne, and peace was to be between them.\* Finally Malachi returns to the most ancient economy, and brings back Moses and Elias, the ancient messengers of God, who has established the covenant in their purifying spirit.—Thus the prophecy always clothed itself in the costume of the age; while there were kings, it adhered for the most part to the promise in relation to a king, which is celebrated in the 89th Psalm.

I sing the mercies of Jehovah forever,

I will proclaim with my mouth

Thy faithfulness from age to age.

And say, for us shall grace be ever sure,

Thy words shall be established like the heavens.

“For I confirmed a covenant with my chosen,

I swore to David my servant,

Thy seed will I establish forever,

And build thy throne ~~from~~ age to age.”

The heavens bear witness to thy wondrous work,

The assembly of saints praise thy faithfulness.

This did the Prophets, they named the future king, *the servant of God, David*.

2. Still farther, they develope in him the fortunes of David and of the seed, which was promised him. David himself was doomed to suffer much, before he could establish his extensive kingdom, and the other was to be chastened with the rod of men,† though the favour of Jehovah his father should not wholly depart from him, and both the suffering and triumph were applied by the Prophets, amidst all the calamities, which they witnessed, to the future king and his kingdom.—This is the key to the remarkable and apparently contradictory representations of the Prophets. The 22d, and all the Psalms of David, descriptive of his afflictions, were unfolded, and consolation given to oppressed and suffering Israel by the consider-

\*2 Sam. vii. 14. †Zech. vi. 12. 13.

ation, that, as it was the fate of their glorious ancestor in this way to attain his elevation, so it must be theirs, and that of their future king, through oppression and suffering to be exalted to dignity and honour. We accordingly find in the Prophets frequent applications of that class of David's Psalms mentioned above.

I place here, as an appendix, the leading Psalm of this class which the Prophets gradually unfolded more and more, and, with which they sought to comfort their depressed people; the Psalm, with the first expressions of which the most exalted sufferer expressed his deep anguish upon the cross.

### I. THE SUFFERER.

A LAMENTATION, Ps. xxii. 1—23.\*

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN, AT THE DAWN OF MORNING,

A PSALM OF DAVID.

My God, my God! wherefore dost thou forsake me?

Why art thou far from helping me, and from my cry?

My God, by day I call, but thou hearest not,

I cry by night, and find no time of rest!

And yet art thou the adorable one,

Who is enthroned amid the praises of Israel.†

In thee our fathers trusted,

They trusted, and thou didst save them,

They cried to thee, and were delivered,

Trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

But I am but a worm, and no man,

Contemned of men, the people's scorn.

All they, that see me, scoff at me,

\* By the sufferer here described, has been understood, sometimes David, then Hezekiah, the whole Jewish nation, then again, an unknown king, or hero, unsuccessfully contending with barbarous foes, and finally the Jewish Messiah. A minute description even of the last sufferings of Christ have been sought for by some in the several traits in this Psalm. This is not the place to go into a discussion of these various views. I may do it, perhaps, on another occasion.

† In the sanctuary, where songs of praise were sung to Jehovah.

They pout the lips, and shake the head.  
 "He calls upon Jehovah, let him save him,  
 Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."

Yet thou didst take me from my mother's womb,  
 And wast my hope upon my mother's breasts.  
 While laid upon the lap, I hung on thee,  
 And from my mother's womb thou wast my God !  
 Be therefore, even now, not far from me,  
 For trouble comes, and there is none to help !

Many bulls have compassed me about,  
 Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.\*  
 They rushed with open mouth upon me,  
 Like ravening and roaring lions.  
 Like water am I poured out,  
 And all my bones are loosed.  
 My heart is melted like wax within me,†  
 My strength dried up like a potshe'd.  
 My tongue too cleaveth to the roof of my mouth,  
 And thou hast laid me in the dust of death  
 Dogs have encompassed me around,‡  
 And gangs of wicked men enclose me,  
 They pierce my hands and feet.  
 I might count over all my bones,  
 They see it, and with joy they gaze upon me.  
 They even now divide my garments,  
 And cast lots upon my vesture.¶

But be not thou, Jehovah, far from me,  
 My strong deliverer, haste and help me,

\* The image of a powerful and enraged enemy. The bullocks of Bashan were distinguished by their strength and wildness. In the opinion of some commentators, there is an allusion here to the region, from which the enemy came, who threatened the royal Psalmist.

† A vivid image of a relaxation and sinking of all the energies.

‡ An image not unusual in the East of swarming and piratical enemies. Dogs running loose without masters are even more bloodthirsty than wolves.

¶ They are so sure of my death, as already in thought to divide my possessions.



Deliver my life from the sword,\*  
 My soul† from the power of the dog.  
 Rescue me from the lion's mouth,  
 And save me from the bullock's horns,‡  
 Among my brethren then will I extol thee,  
 And praise thee in the congregation.

## II. THE SUFFERER DELIVERED.

PSALM XXII. 24—32.||

Ye, that fear Jehovah, praise him!  
 All ye offspring of Jacob, glorify him,  
 And reverence him, ye seed of Israel,  
 For he contemneth not nor despiseth  
 The mournful cry of the afflicted,  
 Nor hath he hid his face from him,  
 But when he cried to him, he heard.

My song shall praise thee in the congregation,  
 Before thy servants will I pay my vows.  
 Eat, and be satisfied, ye humble sufferers,  
 Ye, that seek him, praise Jehovah,  
 Your heart shall be revived forever,§  
 And all inhabitants of the earth,  
 Remembering shall turn to Jehovah,  
 And all the tribes of men worship him.  
 For to Jehovah doth the kingdom pertain,  
 And he is ruler among the nations.

\* The sufferer here is anxious to be assured of the interposition of Jehovah, and does not yield himself to the death, that is threatened, so willingly as the dying Saviour.

† My darling, my dearest part, my life, my soul.

‡ Literally the wild ox or buffalo, an image of powerful and enraged enemies.

|| This *second* part of the Psalm has a very different tone and character from the first, and is neither so powerful in language, nor rich in sentiment. In the circumstances of the case we should naturally expect it to be otherwise, and many commentators consider this a distinct Psalm, designed to accompany the offering of sacrifice.

§ Rich and poor partook of the sacrificial feasts.

Let them that eat the fat of the earth, worship him,  
 And them, that are humble, bow before him,  
 Whose souls are vexed with care !\*  
 The future generations shall revere him,  
 And shall be counted as his people.  
 They come to make his kindness known,  
 And what he hath performed, to future times !—

3. Zion and Jerusalem also passed into the Prophets invested with the character, which had been given them in the Psalms. ' The residence of the most renowned of the ancient kings was to be the yet more magnificent seat of a future king, still more glorious than David, who should reign in Zion, as the peculiar representative of Jehovah.

Arise, be light ! for thy light cometh !†  
 Jehovah's glory goeth forth upon thee.  
 Lo ! darkness covereth the earth,  
 And deep obscurity the nations !

But upon thee Jehovah goeth forth,  
 His glory now is visible upon thee,  
 And all the nations come to thy light,  
 And kings to the brightness, that riseth on thee.

Lift up thine eyes around and see,  
 They all assemble themselves, and come to thee.  
 Thy sons are come from far,  
 From far they bring to thee thy daughters.

Then shalt thou see, and rejoice,  
 Thy heart shall leap, and be exalted,  
 When the tumultuous sea shall turn to thee,  
 And nations bring to thee their wealth.

The caravans of camels cover thee,  
 The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah.  
 All they from Sheba come,  
 They bring thee gold and incense,  
 And praise the glory of Jehovah.

The flocks of Kedar are assembled unto thee,  
 The rams of Nebaioth are made to serve thee,

\* Rich and poor, joyous and sad, i. e. all men should honour Jehovah.

† By the side, on the border, or distant, as the parallelism requires.

They come acceptably upon mine altar,  
 And I will glorify the house of my glory.  
 Who are these, that fly as clouds,  
 And as the doves, that flock to their houses?  
 For now the isles are waiting my command,  
 And ships of Tarsish are made ready,  
 To bring thy sons from distant lands.  
 Their silver and their gold with them,  
 Devoted to the glory of Jehovah,  
 The holy God of Israel, who glorifieth thee.  
 The sons of strangers build thy walls,  
 Their kings shall minister unto thee,  
 For in my wrath I smote thee,  
 But in my favour have I mercy on thee.  
 Thy gates shall be continually open,  
 Nor day nor night shall they be closed,  
 To bring to thee the riches of the nations,  
 And that their kings too may be brought.

Let one read the 22d, 72d, 87th, 102d and other Psalms, and compare them with this passage, and he will at once perceive, that expressions in them respecting the coming of foreigners to Jerusalem, worshipping there, and being accounted as natives, are here merely unfolded, though with the greatest richness and beauty. The nations and regions named by the Prophet are the very same, too, which occur in the Psalm concerning Solomon.\*

So it is with Zion, the dwelling place of God, and the peculiar crown of the country. What the festival and national Psalms sung of present circumstances, the Prophets applied to adorn their views of the future period of the reign of Jehovah. There, in that expected day, this little mountain was to be exalted, its diminutive brook become a river, and water the parched desert.—It is absurd to suppose, that the Prophets meant all this to be taken in its literal and sensuous import, as if Mount Zion was suddenly to swell to a giant range, and all

\* Compare Isa. lx. 6. 7. 13. with Ps. lxxii. 10. 15. 16.

the brass and iron of the temple become gold and silver. So soon as we know, whence they derived these figurative representations, that they did not invent them themselves and to please their own fancy, but pictured their conceptions, and sketched their hopes in the ancient known language of national songs and national hopes, we shall cease to think of such sensuous interpretations, which to a great extent are self-contradictory, and at the same time shall be as far removed at least from their opposite, the obscure abyss of mysticism. We shall see how they, as men of sound understanding, and as the divine sages of their nation, did what all true philosophers do with the works of God in nature.

These observe, and analyze, study the laws, the course, and ultimate tendency of the phænomena of nature, and in like manner they fixed their attention on *the covenant of Jehovah, their ever true and faithful God*, considered his declarations, unfolded the import of his words, studied ancient customs and the character of individuals, accommodated the incidents of more ancient times to their own age and saw in both the germs of the future already beginning to unfold. The Spirit of Jehovah was their guide, for their visions were not unmeaning raptures, but calm predictions, determinations and prospective views, in accordance with a new series, *ordained in higher dignity*.

This seems to me, to be the true link of connexion in the writings of the Prophets, and the best key to their hidden treasures. While we consider, whence they derived these images, for what end they used them, to what period, and under what new form, each applied his own, we draw, as it were, with them from the same consecrated fountains, and fly as they did, like bees in all directions, and extract our sweets from every flower of the ancient world. The rich garden of ancient divine oracles, in history, in the benedictions and Psalms, in our present position lie behind us, the collected

and elaborated flowers of the Prophetick books before us, a beautiful and instructive prospect.

And when we observe step by step, how always the thoughts of God are higher, than the mere human conceptions of even the wisest favourites of heaven ; how all these saw only in their own sphere, and, even in the light of Divine inspiration, could conceive of the future only according to the measure of their own experience, while he, however, went on with his own infinite designs, and from their words and views often unfolded conceptions, which had probably never entered their narrow minds ; how clearly do we see the difference between the *higher economy* and purposes of God, and that *lower economy*, which falls under our immediate observation !

It is undoubtedly true, as expressed in the eulogy upon Moses attached to the close of his history, that "there arose not a Prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face," for in the whole period, which we have passed through we find none, who will bear a comparison with him. Samuel had a ray of his light, but not his power ; he could not raise up the fallen state, much less bring it back to the unattained conceptions of Moses. David had sensibility and delicacy, uprightness and heroism ; but he was a king. Instead of the publick good, the more limited good of his own family occupied his mind. He encircled the Mosaic law with a lyrical garland, but could not increase its permanent safeguards, and still less establish it upon a deeper foundation. The wisdom of Solomon passed into luxurious refinement, the splendour and pomp of a royal court, while the economy of the state was in the mean time broken up. Of those, who came at a later period, Elijah had an arm like Moses, but his age was too deeply sunk ; he purified like the fire and the wind, but he could not give stability and life. Isaiah and other Prophets could speak like Moses ; they were animated by his spirit and his clearsightedness, but where is the work which they accomplished ? the political edifice,

which they left behind them? Moses left it in a form distinctly conceived and carried into effect with an arm that never tired. His original plan, to build to God an altar of stone, and appoint the first born throughout the land to serve him, was the most simple and sublime, that has been found in any system of national worship; and this the Prophets with more spiritual views picture forth only for a future age. When Moses was compelled to yield to his sensuous and rebellious people, who were throughout inclined to worship the golden calf, how pure a conception did he produce in the tabernacle, the tent of the divine lawgiver moving with the movements of a wandering people!—The idea of the most holy place, with its unapproachable mystery, containing only the tables of the law, which it preserved beneath the wings of the mysterious symbol, is so simply sublime, that nothing can be altered or added without desecrating and debasing it. Its holy place had nothing but the shew-bread, the symbol of the most ancient family sacrifices, which were merely feasts. Here stood the most simple feast before the eyes of Jehovah. In front of it burnt the seven lamps, the symbol of his omniscience, and before that again the golden altar sent up its clouds of incense, the symbol of prayer from the most ancient times. That, which properly constituted the temple, contained nothing more. The blood of expiation, and that offered as an acknowledgment of tenure and allegiance, flowed only in the outer court, and how wisely were all these rights adapted to the welfare of the state? How well defined were his laws! and how unweariedly did he labour to improve them! and notwithstanding all the hindrances, which might have discouraged the most resolute, never abandoned the purpose of his life. Even at the last he collected the energies of his spirit, re-ordained his system, and died as a lawgiver, who knew his country, and skilfully adapted his institutions to it. How wise and judicious too was the plan of his Exodous from Egypt! Even the sea formed a path for him, which served at

the same time for a wall, through which his people could not return. Finally what courage, and what a spirit must belong to the man, who in a barren desert could control, cultivate, and soften a rebellious multitude of 600,000 men! Truly *there arose since no Prophet in Israel like Moses*; the arm of the most powerful of them was but the finger of Moses, and the most enlightened of them only reflected the glory of his countenance.

Before thee only do I bow myself, thou heavenly form, more exalted, than Moses, the more beautiful, as thou wast more benign; the more powerful, as thou didst more conceal thy power. With twelve poor, rude and unlearned disciples thou didst accomplish more than Moses with his mighty host, and found a *kingdom of heaven*, the only kingdom, that from its nature can endure forever. For the whole world it was established by thee, but only with the smallest beginning. The seed was planted in the earth, which still is growing, and expanding to diffuse at length that reviving shade, to which all the Prophets point their predictions, of the future. Endued with heavenly powers, thou didst come down to the earth, and find the predictions of the Prophets meet in thee, with courage to fulfil even those of severest import, by poverty, by suffering, and by the most shameful death, because in this way only could they be fulfilled. Moses and Elias, the divinest heroes of the ancient world, conversed with thee upon the holy mount, with thee the third, the greatest, and most benign of all. Thou hast accomplished thine advent, hast accomplished and wilt accomplish all the predictions of the Prophets in that work, which, though invisibly, is still and ever progressive. It is the sole work of its kind ever accomplished in the world, one which no sage, no mighty hero could ever accomplish, and whose consequences reach beyond the boundaries of time. The beautiful regions of the Prophets will conduct us on our way to that kingdom, which he hath established, and towards which we are now advancing.

## REMARK

OF THE FIRST EDITOR.

The continuation of this work, greatly as the author delighted in the employment, and often as he anticipated its prosecution, unhappily never appeared. He wished for a season of leisure to be devoted to it, but it never came. Only a few leaves of the commencement of the third part were found among his papers, which however I would not willingly suffer to be lost, especially as they contain a recapitulation of what has been said in the previous parts, and a brief sketch of the remainder, which was to be concluded in the third part. The following is the fragment referred to.

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We have now so far prepared the ground, that we may contemplate to advantage the growth and expansion of that tree of Israelitish hopes and prophetic anticipations, on which the poetry of the Prophets put forth its flowers. From their patriarch Abraham downward, the nation indulged the prospect, that through their race all the nations of the earth were to receive some great and signal blessing. The shepherd race went down to Egypt, the patriarch of the twelve tribes turned even his dying eyes to the land, where they were destined to dwell, and arranged as it were a prophetic chart of their dwelling places; but he died, and Joseph, the prince among his brethren, also died. The people sunk into a state of bondage, and almost abandoned the hope even of their own deliverance, much more of being instrumental in blessing all other nations. Moses at length delivered them from bondage, improved with great labour the rude character of the nation, received an earnest of their future conquest, saw the land of promise, and died. His painful labours had been limited within a narrow circle. He was obliged to destroy a few inconsiderable states, but the world at large could not feel his



beneficial influence. Israel, after his death, but imperfectly conquered the promised land, and for a long period was oppressed and reduced to a condition of misery, now by this, and now by that neighboring people, until a lion of the tribe of Judah arose, and being satiated with the spoil of nations reposed himself upon mount Zion, one of the fruits of his triumphs. A star went forth from Jacob, a sceptre was raised up in Israel, which smote the heads of Moab, made conquest of Edom, dispersed and overran the Amalekites, the Kenites, and similar tribes. So long as he lived, no one dared fully to arouse the lion, though they ventured in some degree to excite him. But he died, and his royal mind in the anticipation of death was filled with care respecting the future interests of his kingdom. Hence God gave him the promise, not only that his son should sit upon his throne, and reign with undisturbed sway but that a successive series of his descendants should bear the sceptre. This declaration of God elevated his hopes, and animated his heart. It is not only celebrated in several Psalms, as a divine oracle respecting the future interests of the country and the royal family, but the dying king even in his last song encircles his temples with this unfading laurel.\*

With hostile feelings he there reflected upon the malcontents of his kingdom, on whom he had tried every kindness in vain, and whom he considered unfit and undeserving subjects of farther clemency. But with so much the greater joy did he reflect on the covenant in relation to his own family, which God had established with him, from which the figurative expressions in this last song are taken, and which is celebrated also in the 72d, 89th and 122d, Psalms.

Such were the germs, from which the tree of prophetic poetry grew up; the benedictions bestowed upon Abraham, Judah, and David, and since the two former seemed also coin-

\*2 Sam. xxiii. 1. See above in the XI section.

cident to this most victorious, prosperous, and at the same time religious prince, since by his reign, his arrangement of divine worship, but especially by his Psalms, he formed a marked epoch, it was in the nature of things, that his age, especially as delineated in his Psalms, should both for the Prophets, who formed themselves according to the spirit of these songs, and for the people, who sung them, and recalled the events of that period with pride, become as it were the ideal and model of that, which with more splendour they pictured as still future. The blessing of Abraham was only in very general terms; too comprehensive, and too spiritual to admit of particular representation. Moses was too far removed from them, though they took from him for their use all the miracles of the divine interposition, both in Egypt and in the desert, together with the Shechinah. David presented to them a character more glorious, and better known; for the people were now accustomed to notions of royalty. The mutual jealousies of the tribes had ceased, when most of the Prophets wrote, the ten tribes were already in captivity, and a small branch of Judah with the royal stock of David was all that remained. To this therefore tended the current of prophecy, and here the streams flowed together. The views of Jacob and Balaam, the victories, the reign, the piety of David, expressed in his Psalms, the promise of an endless period of peace and happiness under his posterity, who should succeed him upon the throne—all these circumstances were connected with him, and associated him in their minds with their glowing conceptions of the future. He is often styled in the Psalms the son of Jehovah, the first born of God, and was enthroned near the dwelling place of God upon his holy mountain. He brought nations into subjection, had a cultivated taste for musick and poetry, and a regard for right, and spake of himself in his relation to God with humility and self-abasement. His posterity were to enjoy a peaceful kingdom, and his seed to reign so long as sun and moon should endure,

throughout all generations. Judah, therefore, David, Solomon, and their perpetual successors, were represented in the times of the future anointed. Human imagination and poetry can operate in no other way. Even higher divine intuitions can be expressed by them only under known images and signs, and thus the poetry of the Jews naturally employed in its representations the treasures of imagery, which it had, and especially from the most splendid era of the national history.

Let us look then at the course embraced in the third part, on which we are now to enter. After inquiries respecting the political productions ascribed to Solomon, comes the true and characteristick spirit of Hebrew poetry in the writings of the Prophets. We shall contemplate the individual characters of the Prophets, their favourite conceptions and views, together with the circumstances of the age, which served to produce them. The various and distinct colourings given to the imprecations and predictions relating to other nations will be carefully considered. We shall then examine the change produced in their conceptions by the captivity, the altered character of the imagery and figurative language, which now appeared—and so down to the apocryphal writings, in so far as these, as for example the fourth book of Ezra, have the characters of poetry. Finally in the last book of the New Testament as if by regeneration of all the conceptions and images of the ancient Prophets, a new poetical shoot springs up; and at once expands into a tree, blooming with fresh and unfading flowers.

# INDEX

OF THE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED IN THIS  
VOLUME.

<b>GENESIS</b>	I.	p.	7.	12.	Exod.	XXXIV.	7—8:	p.	37.
	II.	19:	p.	14.	Num.	IX.	15-23:	p.	75.
	III.	1. 5. 6:	p.	14.		XII.	6:	p.	50.
	"	24:	p.	17.		XXI.	16:	p.	171.
	IV.	5:	p.	13.		"	14-30:	p.	179.
	"	10:	p.	12.		XXII.	24:	p.	171.
	VIII.	21:	p.	13.		XXVII.	21:	p.	104.
	XX.	7:	p.	49.	DEUT.	VI.	4. 5:	p.	92.
	XXII.	2:	p.	13.		XI.	12-17:	p.	127.
	XLIX.	—	p.	138. 141.		XVIII.	15-20:	p.	50. 132.
<b>Exod.</b>	III.	2. 4. 6:	p.	36.		XX.	—	p.	119. 140.
	"	14:	p.	87.		XXX.	11-14:	p.	92.
	VII.	1:	p.	49.		XXXII.	16. 17:	p.	20.
	XIII.	2:	p.	130.		XXXIII.	—	p.	132. 150. 155.
	XIV.	—	p.	75.		XXXIV.	10:	p.	50.
	"	19. 24:	p.	36. 74.	JOSH.	VI.	—	p.	182.
	XV.	1—22:	p.	26. 65.		X.	11-14:	p.	180.
	XVII.	14:	p.	179.		XIII.	6:	p.	147.
	XIX.	6:	p.	93. 130.	JUD.	IV.	5:	p.	169.
	"	20:	p.	68.		V.	—	p.	68. 185.
	XX.	5:	p.	168.		IX.	7—15:	p.	200.
	XXVIII.	30. 36:	p.	104.		XIII—XVI.	—	p.	184. 209.
	XXXII.	18:	p.	214.		XIV.	—	p.	203.
	"	29:	p.	131.		XV.	—	p.	209.
	"	34:	p.	36.	1 SAM.	II.	1—10:	p.	120. 212.
	XXXIII.	9—23:	p.	37. 74.		X.	10-13:	p.	218.

- 1 SAM. XVII. 45 : p. 69.  
 XIX. 23, 24 : p. 218.
- 2 SAM. I. 19-27 : p. 220.  
 III. 31-34 : p. 250.  
 VII. 8 : p. 217.  
 XXIII. 1-8 : p. 285.
- 1 KINGS, XIX. 8-13 : p. 39.  
 XXII. 22, 23 : p. 50.
- 2 KINGS, III. 15 : p. 50.
- JOB, XXX. 1-8 : p. 139.  
 XXXIII. 23 : p. 20.
- Ps. II. ——— p. 278.  
 VI. ——— p. 242.  
 XVII. ——— p. 271.  
 XIX. ——— p. 243.  
 XXII. 1-23 : p. 300.  
 " 24-32 : p. 302.  
 XXIII. ——— p. 232.  
 XXIV. ——— p. 234.  
 XXXIX. ——— p. 257.  
 XL. 6-10 : p. 110.  
 XLII. ——— p. 259.  
 XLIII. ——— p. 260.  
 XLV. ——— p. 236.  
 L. ——— p. 111.  
 LI. ——— p. 109.  
 LXVIII. ——— p. 70.  
 " 18 : p. 68.  
 LXXII. ——— p. 286.  
 LXXIII. ——— p. 253.  
 LXXVI. ——— p. 273.  
 LXXX. ——— p. 276.  
 LXXXII. ——— p. 101.  
 LXXXIV. ——— p. 96.  
 LXXXVII. ——— p. 288.  
 LXXXIX. 2-6 : p. 299.  
 XC. 1-11 : p. 89.  
 " 11-17 : p. 133.  
 XCI. ——— p. 244.  
 XCII. ——— p. 268.  
 XCIV. ——— p. 102.
- Ps. XCIV. 8-9 : p. 91.  
 XCV. ——— p. 95.  
 XCEX. ——— p. 100.  
 CII. 12, 13. 19-29. p. 90.  
 CVIII. ——— p. 274.  
 CX. ——— p. 282.  
 " 4 : p. 107.  
 CXIII. 9 : p. 120.  
 CXIV. ——— p. 64.  
 CXV. ——— p. 272.  
 CXX. ——— p. 261.  
 CXXI. ——— p. 262.  
 CXXII. ——— p. 98.  
 CXXIV. ——— p. 239.  
 CXXVI. ——— p. 240.  
 CXXVII. ——— p. 120.  
 CXXVIII. ——— p. 118.  
 CXXIX. ——— p. 239.  
 CXXXII. ——— p. 282.  
 " 9. 16 : p. 105.  
 CXXXIII. ——— p. 231.  
 CXXXV. CXXXVI : p. 61.  
 CXXXVII. ——— p. 241.  
 CXLIV. ——— p. 276.  
 CXLVII. ——— p. 102.
- Prov. XXX. ——— p. 203. 206.  
 XXXI. ——— p. 121.
- ECCL. XI. 5 : p. 207.
- ISAIAH, VI. 1-4 : p. 40.  
 VIII. 21, 22 : p. 295.  
 IX. 1-7 : p. 296.  
 X. 33, 34 : p. 294.  
 XI. 1-10 : p. 294.  
 XL. 16 : p. 153.  
 L. 4-11 : p. 52.  
 LV. 8-11 : p. 44.  
 LX. ——— p. 303.  
 LXI. 10-11 : p. 106.
- JEREM. I. 11, 12 : p. 202.  
 IV. 19-24 : p. 45.  
 V. 13 : p. 50.

<b>JER. XXXI.</b>	22 : p. 119.	<b>Hos. XIV.</b>	2 : p. 152.
<b>EZECH. IX.</b>	3 : p. 107.	<b>AMOS, III.</b>	7 : p. 50.
<b>DAN. VII.</b>	9, 10 : p. 41.	<b>68. HAB. III.</b>	—— p. 77.
<b>X.</b>	5 : p. 107.	<b>MAL. II.</b>	7 : p. 107.
<b>Hos. II.</b>	11. 14 : p. 292.	<b>III.</b>	1 : p. 107.
<b>"</b>	19 : p. 293.	<b>SONG OF SOL. IV. 11. 15 :</b>	<b>p. 153.</b>
<b>III.</b>	5 : p. 293.	<b>WISDOM OF SOL. XII. 3. 6 :</b>	<b>p. 139.</b>
<b>XI.</b>	—— p. 62.	<b>ECCLESIASTICUS, L. 1—11 :</b>	<b>p. 106.</b>

## **I N D E X**

### **TO THE CONTENTS OF THIS VOLUME.**

---

- Aaron** as supreme judge, 131—in the blessing of **Moses**, 157.
- Abraham** as a Prophet, 56.
- Agur's** riddle, 266.
- Alliteration**, 213.
- Alphabetical** writings, origin and antiquity of, 33.
- Angels**, 20—angel of **Jehovah**, 36—of his presence, 37—radiance personified, 68—as priests, 107.
- Appearance** of **God** to **Moses**, 36—to the **Elders**, 39—to **Elijah**, 39—to **Isaiah**, 40—to **Ezekiel**, 41—to **Daniel**, 41—different traits in the mode of Divine manifestation in different ages and to different persons, 42—on **Mount Sinai**, 74.
- Asaph**, **Heman** and **Jeduthun**, 223—**Asaph** as a Psalmist, 253.
- Balaam**, history of, 172—blessing upon **Israel**, 174—prophecies concerning **Moab** and other nations, 175—178.
- Barak**, triumphal song of, 187.
- Behemoth** and **Leviathan**, 19.
- Blessings** of **Jacob** upon the tribes, 141—154—of **Moses**, 154—163.
- Book** of the wars of **Jehovah**, 179—181.
- Canaan** indispensable to the **Hebrews**, 126—its influence upon poetry, 128—right of the **Israelites** to it, 140.
- Circumcision** as a national distinction, 94.
- Choral** songs and dances, 26—their connexion, 192.
- Daniel**, vision of, 41.

**David**, application to him of the blessing pronounced upon Judah, 146—brings the Ark of the covenant to Zion, 167—his Psalms, 224—his lamentation over Jonathan, 220—his history as a Psalmist, 222—character as a Psalmist, 247—promises to his offspring, 292—his Zion and Jerusalem as an ideal of the future, 288 and 303.

**Deborah**, her triumphal song, 187.

**Elijah**, visions of, 39.

**Fable**, its origin and import, 14—17—of Jotham, 200—spirit of Oriental, 202.

**Families** united in a tribe, 123.

**Feast of tabernacles**, 94.

**God**, analogy with man, 12—the symbol of fire, 36—face and various manifestations of, 37 and 42—word of, 43—guidance in the desert, 60—upon Sinai, 68—Jehovah Sabaoth, 68—his triumphal progress, 70—in the pillars of fire, 74—pure ideas of the divinity, 87—enthroned on the book of the laws 99—care of Canaan, 127—theocracy, 128—in the laws of Moses, 135.

**Gods of the heathen**, 272.

**Habakkuk's prayer**, 77.

**Hannah song of**, 216.

**Hebrews as herdsmen**, 30—their separation from other nations and their national pride, 31.

**Heroick age of the book of Judges**, 183.

**High Priest**, his office and apparel, 104, 131.

**Jacob in Canaan**, 138—his benedictions, 141—his hopes unaccomplished, 154.

**Jephtha's daughter**, 197.

**Jonathan**, his friendship with David, 219.

**Jotham's fable**, 200.

**Israelites in the desert**, 139—right to Canaan, 140—sorcerer, prohibited among them, 171—under the Judges, 183.

**Korahites**, 258.

**Language, Hebrew**, its early formation, 32—of poetry concern-



ing the domestick relations, 117, 118.

Law, the giving of it by Moses. Miracles attending it, 89—purpose, 93, 114—offerings, 108.

Lebanon, 152.

Levi, ground of the choice of this tribe to the priesthood, 131.

Moses as a Prophet, 43, 57—his history as a subject for epick poetry, 60—his song at the Red Sea, 65—his journeying, 76, 133—his Psalm, 89, 133—founder of the national festivals, 99—his tabernacle, 123—aimed not to form a commercial or warlike people, 123—his expectation of another Prophet like himself, 134—why he represented his doings as the work of God, 134—necessity of making conquest of Canaan, 140—his benedictions, 154—the hopes expressed in them delusive, 162—his plan respecting Mount Tabor, 163—prohibited sorcery, 171—comparison with other men, 306.

Musick combined with dancing in the national songs, 195—its effect upon Saul, 197—musick of the Psalms, 265—musick masters appointed by David, 223.

National festivals of the Hebrews, 94.

National God of the Hebrews, 99, 271.

National pride, 31, 94.

National assemblies established by Moses, 95.

Offerings as an acknowledgment of tenure, 108—as expiation for sin, 109.

Paronomasia in the East, 202—among the Hebrews, 209-215.

Passage of the Red Sea, 62, 65, 76.

Pillars of fire and of cloud, 74.

Poetry of the Hebrews, its origin, 6—its personifications and fables, 11, 14—keeps itself free from the monstrous and extravagant, 20—implies previous culture, 28—influence of outward circumstances in forming it, 30—its pure ideas of God and morals, 90—its local character, 126.

Priests, servants of religion and of the state, 108, 130—their

attire, 104.

Prophets, 35—word of God to them, 43—messengers of consolation and affliction, 44—their signs and symbols, 47—import of the name, 49—seers or wise men, 50—inspired poets, 50—peculiar to the Hebrews, 56—zealous against luxury, 124—their local spirit, 126—difference between the Prophet and soothsayer, 175—influence of the Messiah—Psalms on the Prophets, 299.

Psalms, their origin, 222—purpose, 223—of David, 224—division, 230, 233—of emotion, 241—didactick, 243—anonymous, 261—of degrees, 261—division into five books, 264—musick of, 265—Royal Psalms, 270—their influence on after times, 292.

Riddles among Orientals and specimens of Hebrew, 202—208.

Realm of death as a poetical representation, 21.

Rights of war, 140.

Sabbath, its influence on poetry, 115.

Solomon, condition of Judæa under him, 290—his writings, 291.

Samuel, his history, 42—his calling, 215—first Prophet after Moses, 217—founder of the schools of the Prophets, 217.

Satan as conceived in early times, 20.

Saul under the influence of Musick, 196—interrogates the dead, 198.

Selah, its import, 267.

Samson, his character, 185—riddles, 203—paronomasia, 209.

Sinai, 68, 74—influence on Hebrew Poetry, 68.

Son of God, its import, 278.

Tabernacle, a symbolical representation, 99.

Tabor, 163—165.

Temple, 113.

Theocracy, 128—132.

Thunder, the voice of God, 20.

Tradition, 16.

Tree of knowledge, 19.

**Triumphal songs, 179—181—of Deborah, 187..**

**Urim and Thummim, 104, 132.**

**Wife, her relations, 418—her virtues, 119—Lemuel's praise of a virtuous woman, 121.**

**Word of God to the Prophets, 43—influence on Hebrew Poetry, 46.**

**Zion, 167—in poetry, 288.**

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